POLICY PAPER

Settling In: Exploring Good Settlement for Refugee Young People in Australia

December 2006

Settling In: Exploring Good Settlement for Refugee Young People in Australia

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⋏ Preface

"Despite all of the challenges facing young refugees, perhaps the most inspiring part of their psychological outlook was that of their optimism for the future. Almost all of the young people interviewed spoke positively about the future. They had endured so much already, they felt sure they could make good futures for themselves. Considering that all of the young people interviewed had identified themselves as someone who had experienced significant anxiety or depression, this view of the future demonstrates enormous courage and conviction."

(Brough *et al* 2003: 193)

Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI)

The Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI) is a community based organisation that advocates for the needs of young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. In supporting young people, CMYI combines policy development and direct service delivery within a community development framework. This approach gives CMYI strong connections with young people and their communities while enabling positive change on a local, state and national level.

What is Good Youth Settlement? was developed in 2005-2006 through funding provided by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA).

⚚ SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1: Develop a national refugee youth settlement strategy

CMYI recommends the development of an inter-departmental refugee youth strategy at the federal level that outlines a process of ongoing needs identification, provide analysis and incorporate findings into wider settlement planning frameworks and guidelines.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Develop an on-arrival case co-ordination model for young people

CMYI recommends the development of an on-arrival case co-ordination model that would provide a holistic needs analysis and tailored support for all newly arrived young people and their families.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Provide enhanced youth orientation and information

CMYI recommends the development of a comprehensive youth orientation and information provision strategy.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Develop programs that build social capital

CMYI recommends the development of programs that build social capital based on existing peer support and sport and recreation strategies.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Co-ordinate the rollout of cross cultural parenting programs

CMYI recommends that existing good practice models of parenting programs tailored to the needs of newly arrived communities be co-ordinated and supported through ongoing funding.

RECOMMENDATION 6: Support greater family-school engagement

CMYI recommends that support be provided to enable schools to employ culturally sensitive strategies to increase the engagement of parents and carers.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Further support refugee community development initiatives

CMYI recommends support for refugee youth leadership and youth-led initiatives in the provision of holistic support for young people.

RECOMMENDATION 8: Develop community education programs & intercultural dialogue

CMYI recommends increased support for community education programs that build understanding of refugees and humanitarian entrants.

RECOMMENDATION 9: Enhance research and data collection

CMYI recommends funding for a co-ordinated approach to national data collection.

RECOMMENDATION 10: Invest in sector support

CMYI recommends professional development and training for generalist and government services be enhanced to support culturally and linguistically responsive practice.

⚘ 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

What is good youth settlement? explores what it means for a refugee young person to 'settle well' in Australia. Australia is a country with a long history of effectively resettling refugees, however shifts in the make-up of our humanitarian intake, as well as changing political, international and socio-economic environments, impact on the settlement experiences and outcomes of newly arrived young people and communities. Reviewing the Australian settlement system can help identify gaps in services as well as positive practices, and assist in planning for better outcomes for refugee young people and the broader Australian community.

This paper seeks to explore definitions and meanings of 'good settlement', investigate our current service system, introduce some of the components of effective settlement systems which address young people's needs, and make a series of recommendations within a 'framework for good youth settlement'.

1.2 WHY FOCUS ON REFUGEE YOUNG PEOPLE?

Changing demographics

In the past decade, 63 489 of the 97 656 people (65%) who arrived in Australia under the Federal Government's Humanitarian Program were under the age of 30 at the time of their arrival (DIMA Settlement Database, accessed 23/05/06). As shown in Figure 1, there has been a significant shift in the proportion of young people represented within the Humanitarian Program.

The changing regional focus of Australia's Humanitarian Program over the past decade has also shifted the demographic profile of refugee young people arriving in Australia and subsequently their settlement needs. Figure 2 shows the top 10 countries of birth for all Humanitarian arrivals in 2000 and 2005, indicating a significant shift in the program away from the settlement of young people from the Former Yugoslavia and the Horn of Africa (Somalia, Eritrea and Ethiopia), towards those from ongoing conflicts in Sudan, Iraq and Afghanistan, and a smaller but growing number from countries in West and Central Africa (including Liberia, Sierra Leone, DR Congo, Rwanda and Burundi).

Increasingly, Australia is welcoming refugee young people who have had fewer years of previous schooling compared with earlier cohorts and who have lived for extended periods of time in refugee camps and moving from one unstable situation to another.

Figure 1

Humanitarian Arrivals Settling in Australia by Age Distribution 1997/98, 2001/02 and 2005/06
(Migration Stream: Humanitarian - Refugee; Special Assistance; Special Humanitarian Program; Onshore Humanitarian)
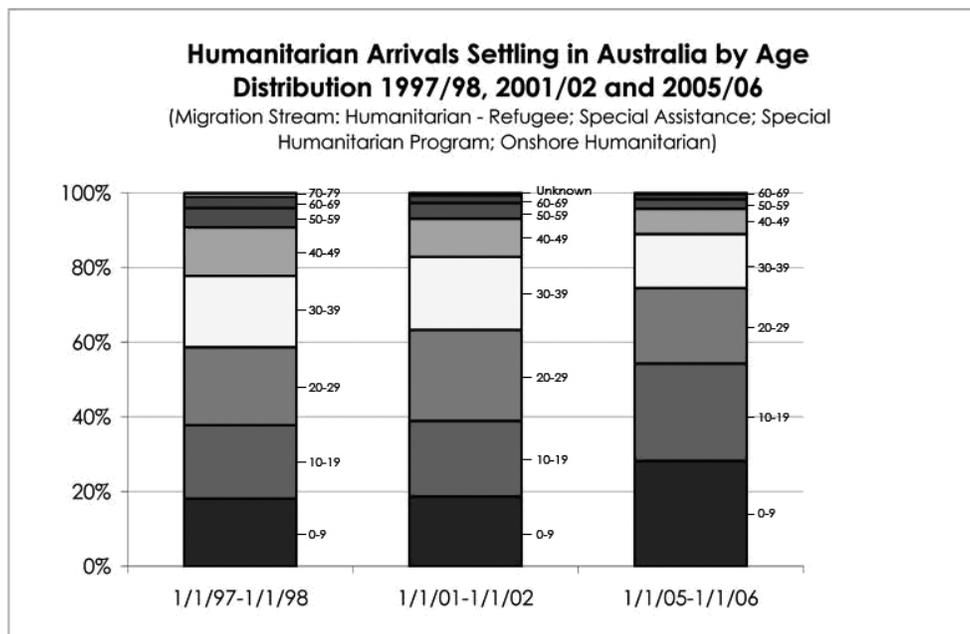
Source: Department of Immigration & Multicultural Affairs Settlement Database.
Date accessed: 12 May 2006

Notes:

1. Age is recorded as at date of arrival.

2. The data shown here includes both persons who arrived during the reference period as migrants and persons who arrived as temporary entrants and were later granted permanent resident status onshore.

3. Data on non-visaed permanent arrivals (eg New Zealand citizens) is not included.

4. The data in this report has been compiled from a number of information sources within DIMA. The collection of some data items in these information systems is not mandatory. As a consequence there may be a large number recorded as 'unknown' for some items, including some of the selection variables on which this report is based. Because of the possibility of a high number being recorded as 'unknown' for some items, the data shown here should only be taken as indicative of the actual number of settlers with these characteristics.

5. In addition to the numbers shown in the table above, there were a small number of settlers for whom sex was not recorded.

nfd = not further defined

nec = not elsewhere classified

Figure 2

Top 10 Countries of Birth, All Humanitarian Entrants, 2000 and 2005

1 Jan 2000 – 31 Dec 2000		1 Jan 2005 – 31 Dec 2005	
Iraq	1 997	Sudan	4 373
Former Yugoslavia	1 489	Iraq	1 661
Croatia	1 396	Other Central and West Africa	1 324
Afghanistan	1 230	Afghanistan	1 208
Bosnia-Herzogovina	802	Sierra Leone	604
Sudan	777	Other Southern and East Africa	483
Iran	577	Kenya	420
Ethiopia	218	Iran	373
Somalia	215	Burma (Myanmar)	357
Federal Republic of Yugoslavia	185	Egypt	347
TOTAL FOR PROGRAM	10 730	TOTAL FOR PROGRAM	13 018

DIMA, Settlement Database, accessed 23/05/06

The experiences of refugee young people

New arrivals from refugee backgrounds are likely, as a result of their pre-migration and migration experiences, to face common difficulties in their efforts to adjust to a new life in Australia. Young refugees also have needs that are distinct from those of older refugees (Coventry et al. 2002: 13). As well as adjusting to resettlement in a new country, recovering from trauma, navigating education, employment and complex bureaucratic systems, refugee young people must also negotiate family, peer, individual and community expectations within the context of adolescence.

Assumptions are often made that young refugees are particularly resilient, and more able to quickly recover and adapt to Australian life than their adult counterparts. There is often an accompanying presumption that young people are less likely to have been exposed to traumatic events or directly affected by violence, and are therefore less traumatised. While it is important to acknowledge the many ways in which refugee young people cope with resettlement stresses, they often do so carrying an enormous degree of responsibility at a particularly vulnerable time in their lives.

There are risks for refugee young people of exposure to social exclusion and disconnection for those who are not able to access appropriate support. For example, the DIMIA *Review of Settlement Services* found that:

> *Without early, effective intervention, there is a risk that the initial disadvantages of humanitarian entrants and some of the more 'at risk' family arrivals could become entrenched. Over the longer-term, a combination of interrelated problems such as unemployment, continuing reliance on income support, health issues and physical and social isolation can create a cumulative effect of social and economic exclusion from mainstream Australian society.*
>
> (Commonwealth of Australia 2003: 320-1)

In the absence of early and adequate settlement support, the risk that young people will require assistance in the future to address issues such as homelessness, family breakdown, poor health, crime, drug and alcohol use and other social problems, is magnified. The *Wealth of All Nations* report found for example that:

> *The needs of young refugees are diverse, complex and significant, and they tend to compound each other. Young refugees are likely to suffer considerable socioeconomic disadvantage in the short term, and there is a particularly high risk of homelessness among refugee young people, this being some six to 10 times greater than for school students generally.*
>
> (Coventry *et al* 2002: 56)

1.3 METHODOLOGY

In developing this discussion paper, CMYI used a number of methods to consult with settlement services, youth providers and the government sector, and to engage with current literature on settlement. Our methodology included:

Review of literature

A review of Australian and international literature was undertaken to explore definitions and frameworks for understanding 'good youth settlement'. This included reviewing settlement frameworks in major refugee settlement countries as well as exploring the literature on 'good settlement outcomes' and services for young refugees (see references for full bibliography).

Settlement youth workers forum

A forum involving a range of service providers working directly with refugee young people was held in March 2006. The forum examined: indicators for good settlement among young people; the definition of 'good settlement'; 'ideal' service systems; and settlement system gaps.

Consultations with stakeholders

Consultations were held with stakeholders to explore the questions and issues addressed through the worker forum. Those consulted included representatives from the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA), Australian Catholic University (ACU), Refugee Health Research Centre (RHRC - La Trobe University), University of Melbourne (UM), Western Young People's Independent Network (WYPIN), the Migrant Information Centre (MIC), and 16 CMYI refugee youth workers.

Consultations with refugee young people

Ten young people who had settled in Australia from Somali, Lebanese, Vietnamese, Chinese Malay, Egyptian and Kurdish backgrounds were interviewed by a peer researcher for the purposes of exploring their settlement experiences. Their ages ranged from 16 to 26 and they had been in Australia from between 3 to 15 years.

Review of Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council Strategy

Through *What is good youth settlement?* a review of the RRAC Refugee Youth Strategy (2000) was identify progress and remaining gaps.

1.4 OUTLINE

What is good youth settlement? is divided into three main sections:

Section 2 looks at definitions and concepts of 'good settlement'. This includes a review of the national and international literature, an analysis of the Australian Government's definition or goals of settlement, introduces concepts such as bridging and bonding social capital as the 'glue' to positive settlement outcomes, and reflects on 'good youth settlement' as articulated through our consultations with workers and young people.

Section 3 looks at the settlement system and environment in Australia, outlining programs and services and how refugee young people fit within these. Through this section, a review of the RRAC strategy (2000) is introduced to explore what is currently working well and where there are still gaps in services for refugee young people.

Section 4 explores frameworks and recommendations for supporting refugee young people, and sets out future directions needed for developing a comprehensive refugee youth settlement framework.

2. DEFINING 'GOOD SETTLEMENT'

2.1 OVERVIEW

There are varied understandings of what it means for a refugee to be 'well settled' in a new country. This is rarely articulated in government or other literature. There is difficulty in defining abstract and subjective concepts such as 'wellbeing', 'citizenship' and 'social connectedness'. Nonetheless, it is important to enter into discussion about what Australia means when it opens its doors to people fleeing persecution, what the expectations are for refugees settling in Australia, and the policy implications that arise including decisions about which services and systems should be put in place to facilitate the goals of settlement?

2.2 DEFINING SETTLEMENT

Integration

Integration is one concept that has been used to define the goal of a well-settled person or community. Integration, in contrast to the idea of assimilation, infers the full participation of new arrivals in the country of settlement without necessitating a loss of identity or a one-way process whereby migrants or refugees are simply absorbed into their new surroundings.

Integration assumes that there are multiple parts, identities, communities and so on, that make up the whole society, and that new arrivals have are able to contribute and become active citizens of a cohesive and diverse community. As such, integration is a useful defining concept. Australia is characterised by its diversity with approximately 21% of the population born overseas (ABS Census 2001). As Kathleen Valtonen puts it, integration is defined as:

> … the ability to participate fully in economic, social, cultural and political activities, without having to relinquish one's own distinct ethnocultural identity and culture. It is at the same time a process by which settling persons become part of the social, institutional and cultural fabric of a society (Breton 1992)."

> (Valtonen 2004: 74)

She goes on to argue that:

> Integration can be understood as a project of continuity, which is rooted in the struggle for human rights in the country of origin, and later re-focused in settlement conditions on citizenship rights. It can be seen as a difficult political and cultural struggle for the recognition and realisation of basic rights for settling individuals and communities. It is a process of capacity building to exercise substantive citizenship and participate fully in all societal spheres.

> (Valtonen 2004: 86)

Goals for integration

In her longitudinal study of refugee communities in Finland, Valtonen develops a useful conceptual approach to settlement that sees refugees as 'settlement actors' seeking specific conditions for their own integration. These she defines as:

- emancipation (freedom from oppression);
- parity (valorisation of resources and credentials);
- interdependence (social bonds, reciprocity); and
- cultural integrity (being able to shape the pace and terms of cultural adjustment).

(Valtonen 2004: 87)

Valtonen further develops this model by outlining how this should influence policy and program development. For example, an emancipatory focus for settlement programs would seek to minimise impediments to the labour market and higher education and pre-empt the effects/development of a minority status.

The *UNHCR Integration Handbook: Refugee Resettlement* (2002) also provides a definition of settlement that is based on the concept of integration. According to UNHCR, the nine internationally accepted goals for integration of resettled refugees are:

- To restore refugees' security, control, and social and economic independence;
- To promote the capacity for refugees to rebuild a positive future in a receiving society;
- To promote family reunification;
- To promote connections with volunteers and professionals able to provide support;
- To restore confidence in political systems and institutions, human rights, and the rule of law;
- To promote cultural and religious integrity and restore attachments to community and culture;
- To counter racism, discrimination, and xenophobia and build welcoming communities;
- To support the development of strong, cohesive refugee communities;
- To foster conditions which support refugees of different ages, family statuses, gender, and past experience.

(UNHCR 2002)

These goals follow on from UNHCR's *Broad Survey on the "Integration" of Resettled Refugees* (1997), whose respondents (Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Netherlands, Norway, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States) identified the 'Principal ingredients for successful integration', in order of priority, as:

- Employment/income;
- Language;

- Support of persons from a similar background;
- Support of, and reunification with, close family members;
- Good settlement services;
- Good physical and mental health (access to appropriate care);
- Access to education; and
- Appropriate housing.

(UNHCR 1997: 5)

Participation and substantive citizenship

Participation and citizenship are closely related concepts and have also been articulated as important settlement goals and measures of the successful integration of refugees in a country. Castles' three-policy model of integration (assimilationist, pluralist and differential exclusionist – see Figure 3) suggests that *substantive citizenship* is a necessary measure of a person being fully integrated into a pluralist society.

A distinction is made between formal citizenship or formal state membership, and substantive citizenship. Formal citizenship however is not a sufficient condition for substantive citizenship, which comprises the array of rights, the actual pattern of participation and, in particular, the ability to exercise political, civil and social rights (Bottomore 1992: 92). These concepts go beyond the socio-economic conditions of settling refugees (e.g. housing, education), and touch upon ideas of power and agency, in particular refugees as active agents of change and in shaping their own future.

Figure 3. Castles Three-Policy Model of Integration

Assimilationist refers to settlers being subsumed within the mainstream. **Pluralist** refers to the acceptance of settlers maintaining their own cultural identities and practices, while becoming equal participants in the society. **Differential exclusionist**, "can capture the different configurations of exclusion which result from the impacting social structures and dynamics of settlement". For example, refugees may be integrated into some sectors of society and excluded from others, such as the integration of refugees into the labour market whilst still being excluded from full civil, social and political rights.

(Valtonen (2004: 73, 92).

2.3 HOW ARE SETTLEMENT GOALS DEFINED IN AUSTRALIA?

In 2003 the Federal Government published a *Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants* that comprehensively examined Australia's settlement system. In articulating the goals of Australia's immigration program, the report stated that:

Australia's immigration program aims for an intake that has the capacity to contribute to Australia's economic objectives, recognises the value of family migration and meets Australia's humanitarian commitments. It also makes an important contribution to Australia's population future. The ageing of the Australian population and the increasing ratio of dependents to working population make it essential that all members of the Australian community, including new arrivals, are equipped to participate fully in the economic and social life of the community.

(Commonwealth of Australia 2003: 8)

Although it does not deal specifically with the settlement goals of Humanitarian entrants, *Updating the 1999 New Agenda for Multicultural Australia: Strategic directions for 2003-2006* articulates some of the Australian Government's vision for a multicultural Australia, with a particular focus on concepts of inclusiveness, access and equity:

The key to the success of Australian multiculturalism is inclusiveness. Every Australian benefits from our diversity and all Australians have the right to be active and equal participants in Australian society, free to live their lives and maintain their cultural traditions.

Responsibilities of all *– all Australians have a civic duty to support those basic structures and principles of Australian society which guarantee us our freedom and equality and enable diversity in our society to flourish;*

Respect for each person *– subject to the law, all Australians have the right to express their own culture and beliefs and have a reciprocal obligation to respect the right of others to do the same;*

Fairness for each person *– all Australians are entitled to equality of treatment and opportunity. Social equity allows us all to contribute to the social, political and economic life of Australia, free from discrimination, including on the grounds of race, culture, religion, language, location, gender or place of birth; and*

Benefits for all *– all Australians benefit from productive diversity, that is, the significant cultural, social and economic dividends arising from the diversity of our population. Diversity works for all Australians.*

Without necessarily stating this, such a vision seems to fit within a pluralist framework of integration (see Figure 3), whereby those settling in Australia are enabled to maintain their own cultural identities and practices while becoming equal participants in the society. At the same time, the vision of a diverse society is constrained within the broader framework of Australian law and the (poorly-defined) 'structures and principles of Australian society'.

In terms of policies for promoting such a vision of inclusiveness and multiculturalism, the Federal Government's Access and Equity strategy specifically mentions the need for investment in 'vulnerable individuals' such as refugees, but the objective appears to be to prevent social dislocation and the opportunity costs of *not* facilitating integration:

> *The primary objective of the Access and Equity strategy is to ensure that government services and programs are attuned to the realities of diversity in Australian society. There is a strong case for better developing even greater levels of government investment in vulnerable individuals. Otherwise, the cost of remedying the problems that stem from social dislocation and lost opportunities for personal advancement will be greater in the years ahead. This is particularly relevant for refugees with a history of torture and trauma and who may have had a chaotic educational background or those who do not have their qualifications recognised in Australia.*

> *In this regard, settlement programs to assist migrants and humanitarian entrants are positive investments that contribute to each person's ability to* **participate fully in our multicultural society**, **realise their personal aspirations**, *and* **benefit Australia**.

While the Australian Government is able to articulate the goals of a diverse, multicultural society, there is little reference given to what 'good settlement' might look like for a refugee young person. That is, if we take the three broad goals of settlement listed above – to participate fully in our multicultural society, realise personal aspirations and benefit Australia – what policies or programs need to be put in place to ensure refugee young people achieve these goals?

2.4 HOW DO WE KNOW WHEN A YOUNG PERSON HAS SETTLED WELL?

In May 2006, CMYI hosted a forum to explore good youth settlement. Workers were asked to describe a young person who had 'settled well'. The extensive list of responses, while overlapping, can be grouped into some broad categories: material conditions; educational and occupational needs; broader environmental factors; wellbeing and social connectedness; and empowerment and agency. The responses relate to a combination of physical, emotional, environmental, social, cultural, and economic needs, and most incorporate a measure of the *quality* of needs being met.

Figure 4. A young person who has settled well in Australia would…

Material conditions

- …have stable, long-term adequate housing;
- …have access to culturally appropriate health and other services (for prevention as well as treatment).

Occupational needs

- …have stable, adequate income (both individual and family);
- …be engaged in appropriate education and training to meet their needs;
- …have pathways towards and future opportunities to gain substantial employment;

- ...have a degree of competency in English, adequate for employment and educational advancement.

Broader environmental factors

- ...live in a safe environment, free from discrimination;
- ...be able to access entitlements accorded to all other citizens (e.g. Medicare, family income source, etc).

Sense of wellbeing and connectedness

- ...have hope and vision for the future;
- ...have good support networks and healthy relationships with family, friends and community;
- ...have a sense of being valued, understood and supported;
- ...have formulated an identity in their local, own and broader Australian community (e.g. proud of achievements and background, managing transitions, positive sense of self and identity among peers);
- ...have a positive social life and access to social/recreational options that are welcoming, affordable and accessible;
- ...have been able to re-establish and maintain relationships with family both in Australia and overseas and negotiate family structures in new social context;
- ...have a sense of wellness – both physical and emotional;
- ...have a sense of trust in others.

Agency – capacity to shape future

- ...have realistic goals and a clear pathway to achieve them ("I know where I'm going");
- ...understand social and communication norms in Australia (acculturated);
- ...be managing the shift from dependence to interdependence (independence with connectedness to family/community);
- ...be managing both independence and responsibility;
- ...have confidence in accessing and navigating services, including having knowledge of systems, roles and possibilities.

According to young people CMYI interviewed, settling well in Australia also meant feeling happy or comfortable in their new country. Someone who was 'well settled' would feel Australia was their home, that they 'fitted in' and were contributing to society as a whole as well as to their immediate community. They talked about a well settled young person feeling able to access resources and find the things they needed at a local level to meet their goals.

The wider social environment needs to be accepting for this to occur, so that young people are able to travel freely without feeling they have to explain their identity. Young people also said that they could tell someone was happy and comfortable in Australia when their realistic expectations of the country were realised. These expectations included being accepted and respected, and succeeding academically with sufficient support from education providers. Others said they considered independence as a significant sign of whether someone had settled well, given that a degree of independence allows a young person to help others and therefore contribute to society more broadly.

The young people alluded to the idea that a well settled young person is able to maintain good relationships with their family and community, attending events or functions within their culture, tradition or religious group while participating in events and processes in the broader Australian community. They emphasised relationships with peers and social connectedness as being a crucial element in forming a sense of belonging.

2.5 SOCIAL CAPITAL AND THE BROADER SETTLEMENT CONTEXT

It should be acknowledged that even if there were an ideal service system, positive settlement outcomes for refugee young people are also highly dependent on wider environmental factors. These include: economic factors (such as employment trends, the cost and availability of housing, the state of the economy etc); social factors (such as racism and discrimination, community attitudes and social capital); and political factors (such as the government's stance on multiculturalism or foreign policy in response to international events).

These broader environmental factors are not immutable and can be shaped through public policy, however the scale of interventions are beyond the scope of this paper. Two factors that directly impact on the settlement experiences of refugee young people, and can be addressed through targeted initiatives, are racism and social capital.

Racism

Mesthenos (2002) identified racism as the key factor affecting refugee integration, as many refugees feel excluded by both personal and institutionalised racism. Incidents of racism and discrimination can and do have an effect on how young people see themselves and their place in the community. In a post-September 11 environment and following the December 2005 race riots in Sydney, it is pertinent to point out the need to combat racism and foster greater community understanding to ensure the success of the humanitarian program and those we assist to settle here.

Social capital

Closely linked to this is the concept of social capital as a resource that can foster and promote social harmony. Social capital relates to networks that 'together with shared norms, values and understandings… facilitate co-operation within or among groups' (National Economic and Social Forum 2003: 3-4).

According to Dr Andrew Lohrey:

> *Social capital is created when people join organisations, volunteer, socialise with friends and family, participate in learning activities or develop trust with their neighbour. These and similar activities represent social networks that produce norms of reciprocity, that is the inclination to act positively towards others…*

> (Commonwealth of Australia 2003: 320)

In his pioneering study, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (2000), Robert Putnam writes about two main components to the concept of social capital: **bonding social capital** and **bridging social capital**. The former refers to the value assigned to social networks between homogeneous groups of people, and the latter to social networks between socially heterogeneous groups of a variety of ages, cultures and life experiences. Criminal gangs, for example, can be thought of as creating bonding social capital (linking people with similar values and social make up), while bowling clubs tend to create bridging social capital. Bridging social capital is argued to have a host of other benefits for societies, governments, individuals and communities; Putnam likes to note that joining an organisation cuts in half an individual's chance of dying within the next year. (Wikipaedia accessed 2/6/06)

One of the key tasks in the settlement process, then, is to facilitate both bridging and bonding relationships so that new arrivals are linked to public agencies and bridging across to other groups, while at the same time allowing for bonding and the development of crucial community supports and mutual care at a local level. Rather than pushing for assimilation into the 'mainstream' at the earliest opportunity, the task of effective settlement is to allow for the development of different types of social support. Initiatives such as work experience programs, or peer support/mentoring programs, can support the development of effective bridging relationships. Support groups, recreational activities and youth groups focused on newly arrived young people, or gender or ethno-specific groups, all offer effective structures to encourage bonding. The absence of either of these elements of social capital is a recipe for social exclusion.

⚓ 3. REFUGEE YOUNG PEOPLE AND SETTLEMENT IN AUSTRALIA

3.1 OVERVIEW

Having outlined some of the concepts that define 'good settlement' in the previous section, the following looks at how Australia's settlement system and broader environment enables or facilitates the attainment of these goals. This section provides a brief analysis of the current settlement system – looking at what is working well and where there are gaps – as well as revisiting the Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council paper (2000), *The Challenges and Stresses that Refugee Youth Experience During Resettlement and the Strategy for Refugee Young People*, which proposed a number of changes to the settlement system to support refugee young people.

3.2 AUSTRALIA'S SETTLEMENT SERVICES

Australia's program of settlement support for humanitarian entrants is among the best in the world. Government assistance for humanitarian entrants encompasses a number of key programs and services (see Figure 5). While a similar level of assistance has not been accorded to those who have been recognised as refugees under the on-shore humanitarian program, those who have been assisted to migrate under the Australian government's off-shore humanitarian program have access to a range of services to support their effective resettlement.

3.3 WHAT IS WORKING WELL FOR REFUGEE YOUNG PEOPLE?

Refugee young people have been identified as a priority group by the Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council (RRAC) since 2000 and by the Victorian Settlement Planning Committee (VSPC) since 1995. In a number of ways, this policy focus has ensured significant inroads into improving the level and appropriateness of support to young refugees through the introduction of a range of measures. Indeed, there are a number of programs and initiatives that have been introduced as part of Australia's settlement program which represent good practice in the international arena. These include:

- The development of the RRAC Refugee Youth Strategy in 2000;
- The allocation of youth-specific funding by DIMA within the CSSS grants scheme (now the Settlement Grants Program);
- The development of resources, reports and the piloting of interventions through the VSPC Humanitarian Youth Working Group (including Initiatives focusing on housing, good practice in engaging with young refugees, justice, and education transitions);
- The effective collaboration between State and Federal Government departments and community organisations through the Victorian Settlement Planning Committee (VSPC);

- The funding of the Newly Arrived Youth Support Service (NAYSS) by the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA);
- The recent establishment of the Family Relationship Services for Humanitarian Entrants by FaCSIA;
- The change to policy that ensures that young asylum seekers are no longer held in immigration detention;
- An overall increase in the number of refugee youth education courses targeting the post-compulsory age group.

3.4 WHAT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE FOR HUMANITARIAN ENTRANTS?

While these developments are very promising, a fuller analysis of the spectrum of services provided for humanitarian entrants points to some significant gaps in our settlement support system as it relates to young people. Figure 5 provides an overview of existing settlement services and how refugee young people are faring within this system.

Figure 5. An overview of settlement services

Program/ Service	Details	How are the needs of refugee young people addressed?
SPECIALISED PROGRAMS/SERVICES FOR HUMANITARIAN ENTRANTS (FEDERAL)		
Australian Cultural Orientation Program (AUSCO)	A pre-embarkation cultural orientation program which 'aims to provide entrants with the knowledge to improve their settlement prospects, develop realistic expectations of life in Australia and help them acquire information about Australian culture and society prior to arrival' (COA 2005: 5)	All refugee and humanitarian visa holders between the ages of 12-60 are eligible to attend. The extent to which young people receive information directly is uncertain. Very little youth-specific information provided.
Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS)	Intensive on-arrival support to humanitarian entrants, usually available for up to six months after arrival. IHSS services include: ○ Initial Information and Orientation Assistance ○ Accommodation support (on arrival housing plus assistance with securing long-term accommodation as soon as possible) ○ Household Formation Support (basic material goods to establish a household) ○ Early Health Assessment and Intervention (including short-term torture & trauma counselling) ○ Proposer support (supporting proposers to fulfil their role of assisting SHP entrants to settle. Proposer support is provided on a needs basis).	IHSS services are provided to family units. Families are allocated case coordinators who assess needs and make referrals where appropriate. Young people are not generally assessed separately or provided intensive individual support. Support for Special Humanitarian Program entrants is very limited and dependent on proposers accessing IHSS services. Refugee young people on Temporary Protection (TPVs), Temporary Humanitarian (THVs), Return Pending (RPVs) and Removal Pending Bridging (RPBVs) Visas are not eligible for IHSS services with the exception of short-term torture & trauma counselling.

Settlement Grants Program (SGP) Formerly migrant community services funded through Community Settlement Services Scheme (CSSS) and Migrant Resource Centre/Migrant Service Agency funding	From 1 July 2006, the Settlement Grants Program will replace the Community Settlement Services Scheme (CSSS) and Migrant Resource Centre/Migrant Service Agency funding. SGP services will continue to provide settlement assistance through the provision of settlement information and referral services, facilitation of community capacity building, and the promotion of client needs to mainstream service providers. The SGP provide complementary services to humanitarian entrants receiving IHSS assistance and are not meant to duplicate IHSS services. 'When humanitarian entrants exit the IHSS, they are referred to general settlement services provided through Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs), Migrant Service Agencies (MSAs) and organisations funded under the Community Settlement Services Scheme (CSSS).' (COA 2005: 6)	Some effective youth-specific funding through CSSS/SGP, though no consistent model of funding across states. There is little established process for referring refugee young people from IHSS to SGP programs. Anecdotally, there is minimal direct referral between IHSS/CSSS. Refugee young people on TPV/THV/RPV/RPBV are not eligible for many SGP services.
Refugee Minor Program	Specialised settlement support for unaccompanied minors The Minister for Immigration is awarded guardianship for young people arriving with no parent or next of kin who can provide support until the unaccompanied minor turns 18 years old. The Minister delegates functions as guardian to officers of the child welfare authority in each state and territory. A growing number of non-ward young people with non-parent carers are supported by the program.	Refugee Minor Program directly supports refugee young people who are wards, though the focus of the program to support care arrangements for non-wards limits the degree to which young people themselves are able to be assisted, despite often highly complex situations.
Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)	AMEP assists new arrivals to develop basic English language skills and provides general orientation to 'help them participate in the wider Australian society and access available services' (COA 2005: 7). The AMEP provides up to 510 hours of English tuition with the recent introduction of additional hours (Special Preparatory Program - SPP) for eligible young people.	Some AMEP providers offer very effective youth-specific programs for new arrivals of post-compulsory school age. Increased funding for SPP has assisted in this regard. Providers are not, however, able to offer the range of extra-curricular activities (sports etc) available to students in mainstream schools.
Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)	Telephone and on-site interpreting and translation service, available for humanitarian entrants fee-free (depending on circumstances).	Available to all humanitarian entrants, including young people. Some limitations in availability of translators/ interpreters for emerging communities (e.g. Swahili, Dari, etc). Service providers often need to initiate use of interpreters, and many do not do so. Young people often lack knowledge and training re: their right to and the process for engaging interpreters.
Newly Arrived Youth Support Service (NAYSS)	The NAYSS initiative, funded by the Department Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA), provides culturally appropriate services ranging from early intervention to transition, for newly arrived young people aged 12 to 21. NAYSS is a new initiative (beginning in 2004-05) and flowing on from the DIMIA review of settlement services (2003).	The NAYSS initiative now operates in 13 sites around Australia, specifically targeting refugee young people in areas of highest humanitarian youth settlement. NAYSS services are able to provide intensive casework support.
Family Relationship Services for Humanitarian Entrants	Individual, family and group work support (funded by FaCSIA). Services targeted at addressing family violence; men and family relationships; relationship skills and family counselling; capacity to support children, young people and adults to develop and sustain safe, supportive family relationships.	New initiative targeting humanitarian entrants – unknown as yet how young people are being serviced within the programs funded.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES AVAILABLE TO HUMANITARIAN ENTRANTS (FEDERAL)		
Employment	Job Network providers provide support for all eligible unemployed people, particularly the long term unemployed. Jobs Placement Employment and Training (JPET) providers assist students and unemployed young people aged 15-21 years.	Job Network providers have no humanitarian focus, and there is a severe shortage of specialised job seeking programs for refugee/ migrant young people. JPET program criteria no longer include a refugee focus (although the NAYSS initiative can provide some JPET services to newly arrived young people). Young people on bridging visas are often ineligible for work rights and face severe poverty.
Health	Medicare, Health care card, Maternity allowance, general government health services. Program of Assistance for the Survivors of Torture and Trauma promotes the health and wellbeing of people who have experienced torture and trauma prior to their arrival in Australia. Services provided include counselling, referral, advocacy, education and training, and natural therapies.	Some good youth programs and individual support programs provided by torture & trauma services. Lack of recognition of the needs of refugee young people in general health/mental health system. Young people on bridging visas are often ineligible for Medicare. Visa regimes for those on temporary or bridging visas also at risk of poor mental health. Increasing need for specialist sexual health programs (prevention focused) for refugee and migrant young people currently not being met.
Education	Humanitarian youth entrants of school age are eligible for free State schooling and State Government have supplemented funds to ensure those on temporary visas and asylum seekers are able to attend school. Some TAFE Programs offering specialised courses for newly arrived young people in the post-compulsory years. The Higher Education Loan Program (HECS HELP) - a package of loans to help students pay their course fees. Australian apprenticeships combine training and employment for all people of working age and lead to a nationally recognised qualification. Youth Pathways (previously Jobs Pathways Program) provides intensive assistance to at-risk young people to make a successful transition through to completion of year 12 (or its equivalent) and ultimately, to further education, training or employment. Also see NAYSS.	English as a Second Language programs in mainstream schools are provided in a range of ways to students for up to 7 years. Students with intensive needs require more specialist in-school literacy support. Need for consistent roll out of post compulsory specialist programs within both TAFE and schools (given preference for more school-like education settings). Students on TVP/THV or bridging visas are not eligible for HELP loans. They are also not often eligible for courses longer than 2 years while receiving a Centrelink income. Apprenticeships have not been well marketed to refugee/migrant communities, many of whom choose not to take up trades. There has not been a strong focus on new arrivals in the Youth Pathways program.

| Centrelink income support | Special Benefit, Family Assistance Office payments, Rent Assistance (as part of Special Benefit), Child care benefit, Double orphan pension, Low-income health care card, Youth Allowance. Youth Allowance payments are made to young people if independent or if it is unreasonable for them to live at home.

Humanitarian entrants with permanent residency are eligible to receive income support payments on arrival. On-shore entrants may be eligible for Centrelink payments. Those on bridging visa may be eligible for Asylum Seeker Assistance Scheme payments. | Delays with payment post arrival are often problematic for families.

Income support for asylum seeking young people is less than a full Centrelink allowance. Many families on Bridging visas have no income or work rights. |

OTHER GOVERNMENT SERVICES TARGETING HUMANITARIAN ENTRANTS (VICTORIAN)		
ESL New Arrivals Program	English tuition for new arrivals of school age funded for up to 6-12 months, through intensive English language schools and centres and additional ESL funding through schools (State/Commonwealth funded)	Tailored and often highly effective educational support provided, however refugee young people with disrupted schooling are often unable to make significant enough progress in the limited time available. There is currently no way of distinguishing those with little or no previous schooling in funding scheme.
Refugee Health Nurses Primary School Nurses at English language schools and centres	A Victorian State Govt initiative. Nurses in key areas of high humanitarian intake facilitate health and social needs assessments and provide information, support and referrals.	A relatively new program. Unknown how intensely RHNs are working with secondary schools. Primary School Nurses at Language Centres able to offer a range of assessments and assistance.

3.5 GAPS IN SERVICES FOR REFUGEE YOUNG PEOPLE

In the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs' *Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants* (2003), it was noted that: "While settlement outcomes for most migrants are generally improving, there is a need for earlier, more focused, whole-of-government intervention to improve settlement outcomes for the settlement services target group (especially for newly-arriving humanitarian entrants) and to support community harmony over the longer-term." (Commonwealth of Australia 2003: 8)

While recognising that there are many supportive services available to refugee young people (see Section 3.3), there are also some substantial gaps identified, particularly if we perceive 'good settlement' outcomes as those outlined in Section 2.4.

According to Aristotle (Unpublished, 2000), Australia receives a steady flow of young people who have endured a wide range of atrocities, 'yet we lack a cohesive and well-co-ordinated national approach which embraces a whole-of-life concept of recovery'. One of the biggest gaps is the lack of a co-ordinated framework for planning good settlement outcomes for refugee young people. While the Refugee Resettlement Advisory Committee (RRAC) *Strategy for Refugee Young People* provides a framework for understanding many of the issues young people face, the

absence of a co-ordinated refugee youth resettlement plan at an operational level means that many of the barriers cannot be effectively addressed.

Specialist settlement and youth workers consulted by CMYI have indicated a range of gaps existed in the existing service system. Some of the gaps include:

Humanitarian Settlement Services
- **Lack of youth focus** in the IHSS program – the family focused assessment without specific focus on young people means that their needs are often not recognised at an early stage, leading to problems further down the settlement track;
- **Lack of co-ordination** and collaboration between IHSS programs, SGP/CSSS and other specialist and generalist youth services;
- **Variation in support** for young people, families and proposers being sponsored through the Special Humanitarian Program (SHP);
- **Lack of sufficient focus** on newly arrived young people (or CLD youth in general) in generalist youth and community services, such as local council youth services, and state-funded youth and family support services;
- **Insufficient co-ordination** between federal, state and local governments to ensure equitable resource allocation in areas of high refugee youth intake;
- **Lack of bi-cultural youth and settlement workers** and insufficient incentives and support to encourage newly arrived community members to enter the field.

Education and Employment
- **Lack of refugee loading** in the funding of the ESL New Arrivals program, and therefore insufficient time allocated to young people with disrupted schooling in English Language Centres/ Schools;
- **Paucity of out of school hours learning support programs** (such as homework clubs) available to assist in young people's educational achievement;
- **Failure of job network services** to effectively provide for the needs of those from refugee backgrounds;
- **Reduced focus on refugee young people** as a risk group within the DEWR-funded Jobs Placement Employment and Training (JPET) program.

Family/Community Engagement
- **Lack of consistently funded programs** to assist newly arrived families with the task of raising teenagers (e.g. cross cultural parenting programs);
- **Poor level of understanding** in generalist services around the need to engage with families of newly arrived young people;

- **Little understanding of the Australian youth service system** amongst newly arrived communities and reluctance for many families to allow their children to be involved in activities due to fears around appropriateness and safety.

Social connectedness

- **Lack of adequate social supports** and funding for group programs including peer support models) that build connections between newly arrived and Australian-born young people;
- **Inaccessibility of sport and recreation** opportunities available to newly arrived young people due to poor access to grounds, prohibitive cost, transport difficulties and lack of long-term community-based (as opposed to club/ competition) sports programs;
- **Insufficient emphasis on the need to promote cross-cultural understanding** and reduce racism and discrimination through program funding.

Research and evaluation

- **Lack of research** into refugee young people's needs and experiences;
- **Little systemic analysis/evaluation** of settlement outcomes of refugee young people;
- **Paucity of evaluation** of qualitative outcomes from service provision in relation to meeting the needs of refugee young people;
- **Poor level of data collection** in relation to young refugees, including demographic trends and access to services, and therefore little way of ascertaining the degree to which young people are seeking support and having their needs met.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

4.1 OVERVIEW

There is a need in Australia to think about a multi-faceted policy framework that will ensure refugee young people receive the support they need to facilitate good settlement outcomes, defined in terms of young people's material, occupational, social wellbeing and connectedness, and capacity to shape their future (refer to Section 2.4). The following recommendations seek to address some of the key gaps identified through this discussion paper.

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1: Develop a national refugee youth settlement strategy

An inter-departmental refugee youth strategy at the federal level could outline a process of ongoing needs identification, provide analysis and incorporate findings into wider settlement planning frameworks and guidelines. Such a strategy could outline the ways in which young people's settlement needs will be accommodated within existing funding and frameworks across all government departments, setting out a strategic and operational plan.

Clearly the work undertaken by the Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council on youth needs (2002) offers the basis from which to begin. Another possible framework that could be built upon is that identified in the UNHCR Refugee Resettlement Handbook (Figure 6), which provides the outline for a comprehensive settlement support system that takes account of the needs of refugee young people.

Figure 6. Checklist: Taking account of children and young people

Integration program component	Think about…
Placement	▪ access to ethnic peer support; ▪ the availability of specialist education support.
Early settlement and social support	▪ family sensitive assessment and settlement support [*CMYI - Youth specific assessment and support is also critical in the effective settlement of young people*] ▪ intensive settlement support and alternative care arrangements for separated or unaccompanied refugee minors; ▪ family tracing and reunion provisions for separated minors.
Income support and establishment resources	▪ provisions for separated minors; ▪ provisions for refugee young people approaching or over the age of majority with disrupted education.
Language assistance	▪ availability of language assistance in key systems serving refugee families; ▪ strategies to avoid children and young people being used to interpret on behalf of other family members.
Language training	▪ culturally sensitive school based target language programs; ▪ alternative language training programs for refugee young people approaching or over the age of majority who wish to resume basic education.
Orientation	▪ targeted orientation programs for young people; ▪ school-based orientation programs; ▪ information on matters concerned with parenting (e.g. peer pressure, changing family relationships, the effects of trauma, torture and resettlement on children, drug use, bullying and racism).
Employment and Training	▪ job search and career planning programs for refugee young people…

Health care	• capacity building for health workers who have contact with refugee children and young people (e.g. child health nurses, school nurses).
Welcoming and hospitable communities	• access to recreational and cultural activities; • capacity building initiatives in school communities and child care facilities.
General	• fostering partnership arrangements; • arrangements for providing technical support to key professionals serving refugee children and young people and their families; • work force development initiatives (e.g. bilingual and bi-cultural teaching and child care professionals, cultural advisers, aides); • professional development, training and awareness raising activities for key personnel to enhance their capacity to support refugee children and young people (e.g. teachers, child welfare professionals, nurses, youth workers).

UNHCR, Refugee Resettlement Handbook, Part 3.3 Investing in the
Future: Refugee Children and Young People, p260

It is recommended that this strategy outlines a means by which service co-ordination, capacity building, policy advice and advocacy around refugee youth issues can best be implemented within each state jurisdiction. Most importantly, any national refugee youth strategy needs to outline the ways in which the federal and state governments will work in partnership to deliver shared outcomes for young people. The effective initiatives undertaken as a result of the humanitarian youth working groups under the Victorian Settlement Planning Committee (VSPC) could be further strengthened and placed within a strategic framework, offering a basis for a national model.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Develop an on-arrival case co-ordination model for young people

One of the critical tasks for the Australian settlement service system is to identify young people and families who may be at higher risk of early school leaving, family breakdown, poor mental health and in need of specialist interventions in the early stages of their settlement. The existing service system is unable to respond consistently to newly arrived young people. One way of providing early intervention support is through the development of an on-arrival case co-ordination model that would provide a holistic needs analysis and tailored support for all newly arrived young people and their families.

An on-arrival case co-ordination model needs to include all young people coming under the Humanitarian Program. Young people arriving on Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) visas should not be excluded from this support given the higher rate of family breakdown and other serious issues that services are reporting among this cohort.

As yet there is no list of indicators for identifying risk for refugee youth populations. Nor do we have procedures to follow when young people are seen as 'at risk'. In line with the recommendations outlined in the *Proposer Support Study Research Report* (Margaret Piper and Associates, 2006, unpublished). It is strongly recommended that DIMA, in consultation with IHSS providers, youth settlement workers, and other key stakeholders, develop a new assessment tool that can be used to develop a youth support plan for each new arrival aged 12-24. This assessment model should be holistic and delivered by staff with training and expertise around working with refugee young people and their families.

As Piper has recommended, consideration should be given to developing a rating system to determine the level of care needed for each newly arrived young person. This rating system could be used to establish the level of casework and other assistance provided to the young person and their family. While the degree of support provided to each young person would be dependent on assessed need, a minimum of three meetings with all humanitarian youth arrivals within the first six months of arrival should be a standard requirement. There should also be a final assessment prior to exiting a young person from the program, whereby further referral to existing specialist and generalist youth, education and settlement programs could be facilitated. It is critical to the effectiveness of the program to include both onshore and offshore humanitarian entrants, including all visa categories (e.g. bridging visa holders), and that youth caseworkers work closely with parents/carers and family case workers to ensure family sensitive practice.

What would the service do?

Through an on-arrival case co-ordination model, youth support workers would be an initial point of contact, able to:

- Provide holistic assessment of each young person's needs;
- Develop a tailored plan to address needs identified with the young person and family;
- Provide one-to-one casework support to assist those in medium to high need;
- Provide assistance to young people to access specialist services and link with existing youth programs;
- Provide link to youth guides for practical orientation and support (see following recommendation);
- Provide support to complex family groups or non-parent carers to access family support programs and adjust to parenting in an Australian context;
- Assist the young person to reassess their support plan and goals identified; and
- Link young people at the end of the support period to SGP, NAYSS and other specialist and generalist youth programs.

At a minimum, the support required would include an assessment of each new arrival (aged 12-24) and the formation of a support plan in consultation with the young person and their family/carers.

How would it work?

The program could become a specialist stream within the existing IHSS program, provided there was increased capacity within IHSS for all young people to be assessed. Alternatively, this work could be undertaken by a parallel youth support program working in collaboration with existing family caseworkers and community guides (e.g. NAYSS).

RECOMMENDATION 3: Provide enhanced youth orientation and information

A critical component of settlement support for young people is providing orientation to Australian social, economic, educational and community service systems as well as to our cultural norms.

There are a range of ways in which youth orientation and information provision could be undertaken more effectively:

Pre-arrival information delivered to entrants overseas could be more effectively targeted at the large cohort of entrants who are under the age of 25. The youth-specific orientation package trialled in Thailand and funded by DIMA, is a welcome step towards providing a more appropriate pre-embarkation cultural orientation program for young people.

In terms of **post arrival orientation**, the role of community guides (a component of the existing Victorian IHSS consortium arrangement) could be expanded to include a pool of **youth guides**. Youth guides could be trained to deliver specialist orientation and practical assistance for young people in areas such as enrolling in school and connecting with youth services and the local community. Youth guides could be of immense assistance for young people, providing an element of peer support and role modelling while offering practical help. Youth guides might also be able to assist young people and families and communities to understand the role of youth workers and to access youth activities.

There is a need for **information provision that is tailored to young people's settlement needs** and is delivered sensitively and at the right time. Community based recreation and activities programs offer a good site for providing some of this information, providing opportunity for engagement with activities while also introducing information to support young people in negotiating their settlement.

In addition, CMYI suggests that better use could be made of the **education system for information dissemination**. There are many opportunities to design curricula that inform young people about settlement issues. It is recommended that a state and federal partnership project, involving education and community service providers (including, primary, secondary schools, AMEP services, TAFE, adult education providers and youth workers) develop a package for young people. This could then be used in a range of settings and linked to vocational or academic programs.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Develop programs that build social capital

> *In the process of assisting new arrivals with the highest needs, settlement services can help to build social capital within Australia...This development reflects increasing interest in the ways in which the building of relationships characterised by trust and expectations of reciprocal support can support community cohesion and reduce disconnection and its associated costs...*
>
> (Commonwealth of Australia 2003: 320)

Peer support programs for newly arrived young people, delivered in partnership with community services and schools, can be highly effective at building bridging relationships, increasing cross cultural understanding and improving social integration and support for all young people involved. Programs which involve matching newly arrived refugee young people with existing students have been trialed in a number of regions of Victoria. The VicHealth-funded Connect Project, for

example, is a peer support model that has been well evaluated, provides a model of cross cultural training for participants, and has a parent engagement element. This is one amongst a number of successful models that could be built upon in a relatively cost effective way.

CMYI's experience clearly indicates that adult models of direct service delivery which tend to rely on client-initiated, problem-focussed and appointment-based models, do not meet young people's needs. Effective youth programs need to involve outreach to where young people spend time, build relationships to establish trust, provide attractive activities and information about the sorts of help available to young people, and be sensitive to family and cultural contexts. **Recreation programs** are increasingly being recognised as a legitimate means for delivering settlement support to young people. A range of recreation programs that are free or low cost, and are either delivered through a competition model (such as the CMYI All Nations Soccer Competition), or through participation based programs (which require no particular level of skill) are highly effective and sought after by newly arrived young people and families. Recreation programs provide a 'soft entry point' for settlement support, information and orientation to Australian society. Services provided by settlement youth workers and others working with newly arrived refugee young people therefore need to be appropriately funded to provide recreation-based activities alongside one-to-one and other group work models.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Co-ordinate the rollout of cross cultural parenting programs

The needs of young people cannot be fully met in the absence of adequate support for parents and family members. Newly arrived parents face a huge range of demands in relation to their changing parenting role, and often lack support to adapt to Australian expectations while maintaining their cultural and family norms. It is not uncommon for caring family relationships to break down following unresolved conflict and a breakdown in communication. However with early support for families some of these consequences can be avoided.

There are some good models of parenting programs tailored to the needs of newly arrived communities, however many are run on an ad hoc basis with no consistency of funding. Those most effective at engaging newly arrived communities have trained bi-cultural staff to facilitate programs and have been able to adapt material to ensure its cultural relevance to communities. The Families in Cultural Transition (FICT) model trialed in a number of states, the ABCD Multicultural Program developed in Victoria, and many of the initiatives established through the new FaCSIA-funded Family Relationships Services for Humanitarian Entrants (FRSHE), offer some promise, however a State/Federal partnership to develop resources and programs for newly arrived parents and carers is sorely needed.

Support should not only be available for parent carers. The needs of these non-parent carers are rarely recognised, and despite the recent growth of generalist funding for family interventions in the early years (0-8 yr olds), services and programs for parents and carers of teenagers are currently under-resourced.

RECOMMENDATION 6: Support greater family-school engagement

There is an increasing need to support newly arrived parents and carers to engage with schools. While schools are actively seeking the engagement of newly arrived families in the school community they are often frustrated by a lack of involvement. Likewise, parents are often keen to have more information and dialogue with the school their children attend, but find this difficult or may have different understandings around the role of families in schools. However, if support is provided in a culturally sensitive manner, engagement strategies can be highly successful.

CMYI's publication *Opening the School Gate: Engaging CLD Families in Schools* (2006) provides a resource for schools around engaging CLD families that is based on research and pilots within Victorian schools. However, schools are now requesting professional development and secondary consultation support in order to implement programs of their own.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Further support refugee community development initiatives

Support for **refugee youth leadership and youth-led initiatives** is a key component in the provision of holistic support for young people, particularly in light of the bonding, mentoring and skill development that such initiatives can bring. If young people are to play a role as decision makers and citizens, they need support to understand our socio-political systems, and encouragement to develop confidence, share skills and take up roles in sustainable community organisations.

Community development more broadly within newly arrived communities, with the intention of promoting dialogue and understanding between generations, is also an area in need of further support in order to promote shared perspectives to address youth issues from within communities. When resourced to do so, young people, families and community leaders are well placed to find solutions for existing problems and advise governments of potentially effective responses. Such community building initiatives need to go beyond place-based models, which are often ineffective for refugee communities that are geographically spread across multiple municipalities.

Given the skill and awareness that those with bi-cultural backgrounds are able to offer in supporting refugee young people and families, it is also recommended that a scheme to encourage **bi-cultural workers** into the community sector be introduced, providing training and support for workers to undertake youth and settlement support work. To be effective, such a scheme would need to involve workforce development initiatives, including workplace support and mentoring, alongside pre-service training.

RECOMMENDATION 8: Develop community education programs & intercultural dialogue

The success of refugee settlement is dependent on the existence of a welcoming community. Supporting community education programs that build understanding of refugees and humanitarian entrants is therefore critical. Given the impact of discrimination on the health of the nation, health promotion messages should be effectively targeted at the broader population, and

initiatives are required in school and community based settings to promote a deeper understanding and connection between cultural groups. Social campaigning that encourages open reflection, dialogue and improved understanding between Australian-born and recently arrived community members will have a significant and positive impact on the settlement prospects of young people.

Schools in particular are seeking resources, training and program models which promote cross cultural understanding, both within school curriculum and through extra-curricular programs. Other areas such as sports, public transport and shopping centres have been identified by young people as both the sites of racism and the potential sites for interventions.

RECOMMENDATION 9: Enhance research and data collection

It is evident that there is a need to enhance our youth service system to respond to the increasing number of young people within Australia's humanitarian program and their complex support needs. However, initiatives for refugee young people must be grounded by a solid research base. As Kilbride *et al* (2000) found:

> *The review of the literature confirmed the prior experience of the researchers: there is no real attention being paid to this age group. Their needs, whether they came as very young children or as adolescents, have not been systematically documented, nor have services for them been systematically identified anywhere.*

In order to review and evaluate settlement provision and outcomes for refugee young people, a systematic and consistent level of data must be collected, including tracking demographic patterns and trends relating to refugee young people and their access to services.

It is recommended that a national research project be undertaken which is able to ground the development of a national frameworks for refugee youth resettlement. Such research needs to pay careful attention to the impact that various visa classes are having on settlement outcomes (such as the impact of airfare debts on SHP entrants). With this information we are more likely to be able to ascertain the degree to which young people are seeking support and having their needs met.

RECOMMENDATION 10: Invest in sector support

Much of the material in the UN Resettlement Handbook in relation to young people is of relevance to the Australian context (see Figure 6), particularly the need to foster partnerships and provide technical support to key professionals working with refugee young people (including secondary consultation and professional development). CMYI recommends professional development and training for generalist and government services be enhanced to support culturally and linguistically responsive practice, particularly given the complexity of youth service provision in the settlement context.

Alongside building skills and expertise, mechanisms to improve co-ordination between services should be enhanced. Sharing of resources, discussion of good practice and analysis of emerging youth issues should be funded components of SGP youth programming in each state and territory.

4.3 CONCLUSION

In their qualitative study of refugee young people and mental health in Australia, Brough *et al* (2003: 193) found that:

> *Despite all of the challenges facing young refugees, perhaps the most inspiring part of their psychological outlook was that of their optimism for the future. Almost all of the young people interviewed spoke positively about the future. They had endured so much already, they felt sure they could make good futures for themselves. Considering that all of the young people interviewed had identified themselves as someone who had experienced significant anxiety or depression, this view of the future demonstrates enormous courage and conviction.*

Harnessing this courage and conviction not only represents an investment in refugee young people themselves, but in the Australian community as a whole.

The "good settlement" of newly arrived young people requires not only a service system that is accessible and has multiple entry points, but where young people have ample opportunity to develop both bonding and bridging relationships. Refugee young people should be supported to exercise substantive citizenship, taking their place alongside Australian-born peers as full participants and contributors to the fabric of Australian society. With an increased focus on assessment and early intervention, and a nationally co-ordinated approach to delivering support to all young humanitarian entrants, we are much more likely to see young people able to realise their personal aspirations.

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