

## Creating learning spaces for refugees: The role of multicultural organisations in Australia—Support document

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<<http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1964.html>>

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# Acknowledgments

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## Community Organisations

African Australian Welfare Council (QLD)

African Holistic Settlement Services (VIC)

Anglicare Migrant Services (NSW)

Assyrian Federation of Australia (NSW)

Australian Bosnian Community Services (VIC)

Australian Sudanese Coptic Welfare Assn (NSW)

Ballarat ECC (VIC)

Bosnian Information and Welfare Centre (NSW)

Centacare Cairns - Migrant Settlement Services (QLD)

Ethnic Communities Council, Shepparton (VIC)

Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre (NSW)

Illawara Multicultural Services (2 interviews) (NSW)

Immigrant & Refugee Women's Coalition (VIC)

Inala Community House (QLD)

Islamic Society of Central QLD

Islamic Women's Association of QLD

Macarthur Diversity Services (NSW)

Merhamet MWA Bosnian Welfare (VIC)

Migrant Access Inc (QLD)

Migrant Information Centre Eastern Region (two interviews) (VIC)  
 Migrant Network Services Northern Sydney (NSW)  
 Migrant Resource Centre Townsville-Thuringowa (two interviews) (QLD)  
 Moslem Women's Assn Illawara (NSW)  
 Mount Isa Community Development Assn (QLD)  
 Mt Druitt Ethnic Communities Agency (NSW)  
 Multicultural Development Assn (QLD)  
 Multicultural Families Centre (QLD)  
 Nepean Migrant Access (NSW)  
 NESB Links (VIC)  
 North East Migrant Resource Centre (VIC)  
 Northern Beaches Neighbourhood Service (NSW)  
 South Central Migrant Resource Centre (VIC)  
 South Eastern Migrant Resource Centre (VIC)  
 Springvale Neighbourhood House Inc. (VIC)  
 Sudanese Community Association in Darling Downs Aust (SCADDA) (QLD)  
 Townsville Multicultural Support Group (QLD)  
 Toowoomba Refugee and Migrant Support (QLD)  
 Victorian Arabic Social Services (VIC)  
 Victorian Multi-Ethnic Slavic Welfare Association (VIC)  
 Volunteer Refugee Tutoring and Community Support Program (QLD)  
 Wagga Ethnic Communities' Council (NSW)  
 Youth Affairs Network (QLD)

### Community advisory group

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 Khairy Majeed (Migrant Resource Centre, North-East, Victoria)  
 Endashaw Tesema (African Australian Welfare Council of Victoria).

# Appendix 1

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## James' Story

I love Ballarat. It's a small town and therefore not so busy. Big towns are too busy and too impersonal. So Ballarat is a good place to be.

When I arrived in Ballarat, I was the only Sudanese here. I felt lonely, but within one week I had made lots and lots of friends. You see, I met many people from different countries through one of the local Churches, and also through the B R M C (Ballarat Regional Multicultural Centre).

It was one of the best things that I had experienced in my life. Why? Well I have found that Ballarat people are very friendly, honest and welcoming. So I really feel I am lucky to be here.

I have been here for one year, but I feel like I have been here for many years. Even my English is getting better. I have got support from my friends who have advised me how to get good skills to help others.

My dream is to help others, as well as my family of course. I would also like my kids to have a good education and I feel they can get that here in Australia. They are Australian now, and I hope they can benefit from and add to all that the community has to offer.

I hope and trust that my dream will become reality.

*Words by James B Abraham*

James currently works as a volunteer for the Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council and as an interpreter for Centrelink. He is also a student at School of Mines Ballarat, where he is studying community development.

# Appendix 2

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## Some definitions

The Humanitarian Program in Australia comprises two components that both apply to refugees: offshore resettlement for people overseas, and onshore protection for those people already in Australia who arrived on temporary visas or without ‘authorisation’ (a visa and/or valid passport), and who claim Australia’s protection. There were 13,178 visas granted under the Humanitarian Program in 2004–05, a decrease over the previous year. There were 895 Humanitarian Program visas granted onshore (DIMA 2006, *Settlement Database*). The top source countries for refugees arriving in Victoria in 2004 – 2005 under the Humanitarian Program were: Sudan, Iraq, Liberia, Burma, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Iran, Burundi and Serbia (Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs [DIMA] *Settlement Database*).

Permanent offshore humanitarian visa category refugees are people who are deemed to be subject to persecution in their home country and who are in need of resettlement. The majority of applicants who are considered under this category are identified and referred by the UNHCR to Australia for resettlement. The Refugee category includes the Refugee, In-country Special Humanitarian, Emergency Rescue and Woman at Risk (WaR) sub-categories. Under this category, people are granted Permanent Protection Visas (PPVs). These provide immediate resettlement in the community, full access to all resettlement services and social security benefits, the right to leave the country as well as access to family reunion and citizenship.

Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) visas are granted to people outside their home country who are subject to substantial discrimination amounting to gross violation of human rights in their home country. A proposer who is an Australian citizen, permanent resident or eligible New Zealand citizen, or an organisation that is based in Australia, must support applications for entry under the SHP (DIMA 2006, *Fact Sheets* 60, 62, 65).

People arriving on SHP visas are required to pay for their own airfare and medical screening tests. Families arriving under these conditions often incur significant debts (Heath 2003). According to Olliff (2004), this can create pressure on young people to join the workforce as early as possible, opting to exit English language schools/classes irrespective of whether they have gained the language skills necessary to be able to find long-term, secure employment.

People arriving in Australia since October 1999 without ‘authorisation’ (a visa and/or a valid passport) and who have made successful onshore applications for refugee status are granted Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs). TPVs are granted for a varying amount of time, usually between 30 months and five years. People on TPVs have no access to federally funded resettlement services, including ESL tuition. They have no rights to leave the country or to apply for family reunion or citizenship. They can work and are eligible for Medicare and the Special Benefit.

Since September 2001, ‘unauthorised’ arrivals assessed as meeting the refugee classification cannot apply for a PPV if, since leaving their home country, they have resided for at least seven days in a country where they could have sought and obtained effective protection. As a result, many refugees granted TPVs since 2001 may have the right to seek another TPV but will never be able to seek permanent protection in Australia (Marston 2003; DIMA 2006, *Fact Sheet* 62) The application of this clause seems to be increasingly falling under Ministerial discretion.

Bridging visas are given to people who arrive with a visa and/or valid passport but are awaiting a decision on their refugee status when their visas have expired. They are entitled to temporary resettlement in the community; they have no access to federally funded resettlement services, including ESL tuition.



## Appendix 3

A summary of emergent themes identified during the in-depth interviews and focus groups

Variable	Bosnian	Iraqi	Sudanese
Age	<p>Young find it easier to learn/update English skills</p> <p>Young find it easier to participate in wider community.</p> <p>Older generation worried that their children are losing their culture</p> <p>Older are more commonly illiterate in 1<sup>st</sup> language.</p> <p>Older tend to socialise within their own cultural group.</p>	<p>Young find it easier to learn/update English skills</p> <p>Young find it easier to participate in wider community.</p> <p>Older generation worried that their children are losing their culture.</p> <p>Older are more commonly illiterate in 1<sup>st</sup> language.</p> <p>Older tend to socialise within their own cultural group.</p>	<p>Young find it easier to learn/update English skills</p> <p>Young find it easier to participate in wider community.</p> <p>Young students struggle with formal classroom structures.</p> <p>Many young people opt for employment rather than education out of necessity.</p> <p>Young women not always expected or encouraged to study.</p> <p>Older are more commonly illiterate in 1<sup>st</sup> language.</p> <p>Older tend to socialise within their own cultural group.</p>

Variable	Bosnian	Iraqi	Sudanese
Gender	<p>Domestic violence a problem (linked to torture and trauma issues for men)</p> <p>Men find it harder to adjust to life in Australia.</p> <p>Some men struggle with new gender roles in Australia</p> <p>Men seem to struggle more with issues of torture and trauma are less likely to seek help</p> <p>Generally speaking, women appear to deal with the resettlement process a little better than men (E.g. finding work, improving literacy skills and becoming more involved in the broader community).</p> <p>Women may find it easier to gain employment if they have past experience/ worked in their homeland</p>	<p>Domestic violence a problem (linked to torture and trauma issues for men)</p> <p>Men find it harder to adjust to life in Australia.</p> <p>Some men struggle with new gender roles in Australia</p> <p>Men seem to struggle more with issues of torture and trauma are less likely to seek help</p> <p>Generally speaking, women appear to deal with the resettlement process a little better than men (E.g. finding work, improving literacy skills and becoming more involved in the broader community).</p> <p>Women may find it easier to gain employment if they have past experience/ worked in their homeland</p>	<p>Domestic violence a problem (linked to torture and trauma issues for men)</p> <p>Sudanese women generally have lower levels of education</p> <p>Sudanese women not always encouraged to further their education</p> <p>Some men struggle with the new gender roles in Australia.</p> <p>Men seem to struggle more with issues of torture and trauma are less likely to seek help</p> <p>Women in regional areas find it harder to access education services and enter the workforce.</p> <p>Parents/partners are sometimes unwilling to allow females to travel to the city to access education or work opportunities.</p> <p>Sudanese women are more isolated than the men in their community.</p> <p>Due to lower levels of education some women find it harder to settle than men.</p> <p>Women often suffer with separation anxiety from their young children – because of this they are often not willing to utilise childcare and therefore find it harder to have a life outside their family.</p>

Variable	Bosnian	Iraqi	Sudanese
Geography		<p>Limited choice in regional areas</p> <p>More flexibility and choice when it comes to accessing services and institutions in urban areas</p>	<p>Smaller community (in regional areas) more encouraging and welcoming of newly arrived.</p> <p>Smaller numbers of migrants and refugees in regional areas - services can better meet the needs of those settling in the area.</p> <p>Women sometimes not permitted to travel long distances to the city in order to access education or work.</p>
Educational background	<p>Professionals find it hard to have their qualifications acknowledged in Australia</p> <p>Harder for those with lower educational backgrounds to access education and training</p>	<p>Professionals find it hard to have their qualifications acknowledged in Australia</p> <p>Harder for those with lower educational backgrounds to access education and training</p> <p>Most used to a stricter learning environment</p>	<p>Professionals find it hard to have their qualifications acknowledged in Australia</p> <p>Harder for those with lower educational backgrounds to access education and training</p>

# Appendix 4

## Tables

**Table 1: In-depth interviews - Professional / work background**

Professional background	
Industry sector / previous experience	No.
Welfare (community development, social work, youth work)	23
Voluntary	6
Administration / Business skills	4
Social Sciences / Humanities	4
Health	4
Teaching	3
Science	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>

**Table 2: In-depth interviews - Current position**

Current position							
Project worker		Management		Committee of Management		Total	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
25	55.6	13	28.8	7	15.6	45	100.0

**Table 3: In-depth interviews - Length of employment in current position**

Length of position									
Less than 1 year		1-4 years		5-10 years		10years +		Total	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
7	15.6	22	48.9	11	24.4	5	11.1	45	100.0

**Table 4: In-depth interviews - Client groups**

Client groups					
Specific		All communities		Total	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
17	37.8	28	62.2	45	100.0

**Table 5: In-depth interviews - Geographic service area**

Service area							
Regional		Metropolitan		State		Total	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
23	51.1	14	31.1	8	17.8	45	100.0

**Table 6: In-depth interviews - Age**

Age											
18-24		25-40		41-50		50+		Withheld		Total	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
4	8.9	19	42.3	11	24.4	10	22.2	1	2.2	45	100.0

**Table 7: In-depth interviews - Country of Birth**

Country of Birth					
Australia		Overseas		Total	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
16	35.6	29	64.4	45	100.0

**Table 8: In-depth interviews - Gender**

Gender					
Male		Female		Total	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
11	24.4	34	75.6	45	100.0

**Table 9: Focus groups – Demographics (Gender)**

Community group	Gender				Total	
	M		F			
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Bosnian	15	34.9	28	65.1	43	100.0
Iraqi	16	38.1	26	61.9	42	100.0
Sudanese	22	48.9	23	51.1	45	100.0
Total	53	40.8	77	59.2	130	100.0

**Table 10: Focus groups – Demographics (Age)**

Community group	Age							
	18-24		24-44		45-54		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Bosnian	17	39.5	15	34.9	11	25.6	43	100.0
Iraqi	13	31	22	52.4	7	16.7	42	100.0
Sudanese	14	31.1	26	57.8	5	11.1	45	100.0
Total	44	33.8	63	48.5	23	17.7	130	100.0

**Table 11: Focus groups – Demographics (Employment status)**

Community group	Employment Status						Total	
	Employed		Unemployed		Not looking / Student / Volunteering			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Bosnian	17	39.5	21	48.8	5	11.6	43	100.0
Iraqi	10	23.8	26	61.9	6	14.3	42	100.0
Sudanese	11	24.4	29	64.4	5	11.1	45	100.0
Total	38	29.2	76	58.5	16	12.3	130	100.0

**Table 12: Focus groups – Demographics (Length of residency)**

Community group	Years of residency in Australia									
	Less than 1		1-4 years		5-10 years		10+ years		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Bosnian	0	0.0	8	18.6	29	67.4	6	14.0	43	100.0
Iraqi	4	9.5	25	59.5	12	28.6	1	2.4	42	100.0
Sudanese	11	24.4	31	68.9	3	6.7	0	0.0	45	100.0
Total	15	11.5	64	49.2	44	33.8	7	5.4	130	100.0

**Table 13: Focus groups – Demographics (Education history)**

Community group	Highest level of formal education								Total	
	No formal education		Primary		Secondary/ trade/VET equivalent		Post compulsory			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Bosnian	0	0.0	10	23.3	14	32.6	19	44.2	43	100.0
Iraqi	0	0.0	16	38.1	18	42.9	8	19.0	42	100.0
Sudanese	1	2.2	19	42.2	14	31.1	11	24.4	45	100.0
Total	1	0.8	45	34.6	46	35.4	38	29.2	130	100.0

Please note: In some instances due to rounding errors total percentages do not add up to 100%.

# Appendix 5

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## Ethical Protocols

### Focus group interview arrangements/protocol

As identified in the project brief, this research – in particular the survey and interviews that form a key part of the project - will be conducted with close attention to participant and provider privacy and confidentiality consistent with NCVER, AVETRA and AMSRS standard ethical practices, of which the key principles have been summarised below.

The final survey and results will be published as part of a national project for the National Centre for Vocational Education and Training (NCVER).

### Responsibilities to Respondents

All interviewees will be aged over 18 years.

No persons will be recruited to interview or be interviewed who are unable to give informed consent. All survey and interview questions are related to the research questions.

All data will be collected in a way that ensures individual privacy and confidentiality.

No data will be reported in a way that identifies individual respondents or which is able to be linked to particular organisations.

Respondents' identities must not, without their consent, be revealed to anyone not directly involved in the research project or used for any non-research purpose.

Nobody shall be adversely affected or harmed as a direct result of participating in a research study.

Respondents must be able to check without difficulty, the identity and bona fides of researchers.

Respondents' co-operation in a research project is entirely voluntary at all stages; they must not be misled when being asked for their co-operation.

### Specifically for this project

#### *Recording and consent*

The recording of focus groups will be required (for purposes of analysis only). On recruitment, prospective participants will be informed of recording requirements by the bilingual facilitators/recruiters; respondents will then have the opportunity to decline to take part. No recorded interview will start until the purpose of the interview has been explained and all participants confirm that they understand the reason and agree to the conditions of the interview including the recording of the discussion for internal purposes. Those who do not agree will be free to leave. This two part process of securing informed consent is in place because past experience has shown that some groups may experience high levels of anxiety about recorded discussions.

Furthermore, consent will be attained verbally and not sought in writing as again, some people may be troubled by requests for written consent.

It should also be noted that the researchers will not be reporting data that identifies individuals or programs.

Language and literacy difficulties will not be a barrier to consent; all efforts will be made to ensure the above responsibilities (on behalf of the researchers) are understood by those taking part in the research process. It is for this reason that bilingual, bicultural facilitators will be employed.

### *Respondents will be*

given ample opportunities to ask questions about this research and have had any questions answered to their satisfaction;

free to withdraw any permission given by themselves or their organisation at any time before or after the interviews or focus groups have been completed;

informed at the outset that no survey data or interview will be reported in ways that will identify individual survey respondents or individual organisations;

informed that their organisation will have access to the summarised results of the survey and the final research report on request. A built in feedback process to service providers is part of the methodology.

### *Bilingual bicultural facilitators will be*

formally briefed – a written briefing document will be prepared outlining objectives, research questions, sensitivities and key issues and themes identified in the first two research phases (literature review and in-depth interviews);

asked to recruit focus group participants using a selection guide identifying key demographic characteristics (see Appendix 8 for recruitment template)

provided with a discussion guide;

provided with a reporting template to frame the translation and summary of focus group discussion.



# Appendix 6

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## Interviews with community organisations

**Judith Miralles & Associates Pty Ltd**



Community organisation .....

Interviewer .....

Date / Time .....

**Enhancing refugee language and employability through community engagement**

**NCVER**

**Community consultations - Organisations**

## Section 1 - Network diagram

This section will explore organisations' connections, links and networks - It will focus on both:

local or neighbourhood links? (bridging social capital)
and
Wider links (eg: outside the community, to government, to other countries including countries of temporary refuge)

We understand that immigrants to Australia, particularly refugees have lost many of the important links that they had in their country of origin - for example to family, friends, education, health, culture, language and work.

We are particularly interested in the role your organisation plays in working with other organisations to provide services, support and programs to help get refugees into education, training and work in Australia, as well as to make friends, learn and speak English and get involved in the community.

We are asking you to draw a simple 'network diagram' that shows us the main links your organisation currently has to other organisations that provide these services, support and programs. This diagram will help us understand how your organisation networks or links to other organisations.

Putting your own organisation in the centre of the diagram, we invite you to show us, with lines of varying thickness, the links that you have to other organisations and individuals that currently provide refugees with services, support and programs.

Questions to be asked in this section will include the following:

Think about some community organisations you have contact with (*please visually present responses to the following in a network diagram – on the following page*):

**What are your strong links?**

**What is the nature of these links?**

**How do you create and maintain these links?**

Prompts:

(Only to be used if necessary/not read out in first instance)

Employment links?

Education and training links?

Government links?

Community links?

Links to particularly important individuals?


Are there any blockages? Which organisations don't you get on with?


What is the nature of these blockages/disagreements?


Insert network diagram here:

Key for network diagram:

Strong link = 

Normal link = 

Weak link = 

Blockage = 

Competition = 

Unconnected =

I'd like to focus now on what refugees get out of their links to your organisation

**How do you get refugees connected to or involved in your organisation?**

**Section 2 – Role of organisation**

This section will explore the ways in which organisations feel they enhance refugee language and employability.

**What do you do to help refugees in the settlement process?**

Prompts:

(Only to be used if necessary/not read out in first instance)

Programs - Give categories (eg: Job skills, resume writing, basic literacy, pre-employment programs, cultural)

Mentoring

Partnerships

Other?

**What do you find works best for refugees in terms of supporting them:**

**Into education and training?**

**To Be job-ready?**

**Into work?**

**To be involved in the community?**

**To improve English (language and literacy) skills?**

In your work with refugees, what are the differences - if any, (eg: age, gender, educational background, whether from rural background) in terms of supporting people from refugee backgrounds (see table on p4):

Into education and training?

To be job-ready?

Into work?

To be involved in the community?

To improve English (language and literacy) skills

	Specify differences (if any) for each of the categories:				
	Education and training	Job ready	Into work	Involved in the community	Improving English skills
Age					

	Specify differences (if any) for each of the categories:				
	Education and training	Job ready	Into work	Involved in the community	Improving English skills
Gender					
Educational Background					

	Specify differences (if any) for each of the categories:				
	Education and training	Job ready	Into work	Involved in the community	Improving English skills
Rural Background					

### **Section 3 – Background**

This section will collect background information on those interviewed.

**What is your organisation background/past work experience?**

**What is your current position?**

**How many years have you been in this position?**

**Which client groups do you work with?**

**What area (location) does your current organisation service?**

**Further demographic questions:**

**What is your age?**

**In what country were you born?**

**Is the respondent male or female?**



# Appendix 7

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## Community focus groups

**Judith Miralles & Associates** Pty Ltd



Community .....

Facilitator .....

Date / Time .....

Venue .....

**Enhancing refugee language and employability through community  
engagement**

**NCVER**

**Community focus groups**

## Section 1 - Network diagram

This section will explore individuals' connections, links and networks - It will focus on both:

local or neighbourhood links? (bridging social capital)
and
Wider links (eg: outside the community, to government, to other countries including countries of temporary refuge)

We understand that as migrants to Australia you have probably lost a lot of the important links that you had in your country of origin - for example to family, friends, education, health, culture, language and work.

We are interested in knowing what contacts or links you currently have, for example to services, support and programs - not only to help you find education, training and work in Australia, but to make friends, learn and speak English and get involved in the community.

We are asking you to draw a simple 'network diagram' that shows us the main links you currently have. This diagram will help us understand what support networks you do or don't have access to.

Putting yourself in the centre of the diagram, we invite you to show us, with lines of varying thickness, the links that you have to organisations and individuals that currently provide you with services, support and programs.

Questions to be asked in this section will include the following:

Think about some community organisations you have contact with:

**What are your strong links?**

**What is the nature of these links?**

Prompts:

(Only to be used if necessary/not read out in first instance)

Employment links?

Education and training links?

Government links?

Community links?

Links to particularly important individuals?

**How did you find out about these organisations?**

**Thinking about these organisations, how could your links to them have been improved?**

**What encouraged you to go to the organisations?**

**What organisations are you less likely to go to for help with:**

**Education and training?**

**Being job-ready?**

**Finding work?**

**Becoming involved in the community?**

**Improving your English (language and literacy) skills?**

**Why?**

## **Section 2 – Settlement experience of language, literacy and work**

**I'd like to focus now on your experiences of those organisations in terms of helping you:**

**Into education and training?**

**Be job-ready?**

**Into work?**

**To be involved in the community?**

**To improve your English (language and literacy) skills?**

**How could your experiences have been improved?** (e.g. improved practical outcomes)

**Do particular members of your community have special needs?**

## **Section 3 – Demographic profile**

On recruitment; age, gender, length of residency, education history will be ascertained to ensure representative samples.

## Appendix 8

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### Focus group recruitment template

**Language group:** ..... **Date:** .....

**Group type:** ..... **Venue/location:** .....

✓ **Please make sure that all participants have had contact with community organisations**

		Gender		Age			Employment status		
		M	F	18 - 24	25 - 44	45 - 64	Employed	Unemployed	
	Name of respondent								Length in Australia
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									

8									
9									
10									
11									
12									