



Bench-Marking the Resettlement Process of New Zealand against Melbourne and Sydney, Australia

A report on a study trip supported by the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust



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1.0 Acknowledgments

I am very grateful for the support of the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Board for the great opportunity of a fellowship that enabled me to travel to Australia and visit different cities Melbourne, Sydney, and Canberra. This allowed me to bench-mark the resettlement programme of New Zealand, specifically against Melbourne and Sydney, with a special focus on employment and housing.

I want to acknowledge the generous support of all interviewees in my research project including the organisations and individual participants. I would like to express my sincere thanks, specially to staff of AMES Australia in Victoria, Settlement Services International (SSI), and SydWest Multicultural Services in Sydney. I also extend my special thanks to all humanitarian migrant individual representatives from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, Afghanistan, Iraq and South Sudan, with families and community members in Melbourne, Sydney, and Canberra for welcoming me to Australia and making me feel at home.

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2.0 Executive Summary

Newcomer communities under humanitarian programmes (Quota refugee) face a number of new challenges in their resettlement process in New Zealand. Lack of local experience, networks and qualifications make the resettlement process hardest on newcomer communities. Although some may arrive with high qualifications these are not recognised, and even upgrading their qualification turns out to be not enough. Those who educate themselves here still face some challenges finding a job.

This research sought to help answer the following questions:

- What roles do organisations (e.g. government agencies, non-governmental organisations, and community organisations) play in dealing with employment and housing issues in refugee resettlement?
- What are important factors in achieving better resettlement outcomes in employment and housing?

The first question focused on the roles of the service providers, including the government, NGOs, and community leaders. It also provided opportunities to gain other key learning related to resettlement. The second question sought participants' opinions on factors in achieving better resettlement outcomes in employment and housing. Participants identified factors on access to support services, individual need assessment on arrival and appropriate training and networking. Discussions on positive and negative aspects of the roles played by the services providers and community organisations allowed for reflection on findings in relation to the New Zealand resettlement programme.

This report centres on employment and housing issues, using the Australian experience to consider different ways of improving New Zealand's resettlement outcomes for individual communities and their families. It puts forward some recommendations for consideration on how the New Zealand resettlement sector might further develop and improve their resettlement services for newcomers and resettled communities onshore and post resettlement.

- At Mangere Resettlement Centre (MRC) establish a system, similar to that at Centrelink, that on arrival assesses individuals according to their level of knowledge and experience, thereby identifying at an early stage the prior learning of highly qualified and competent people. Identify individual needs at an early stage to make recommendations as to an appropriate pathway to employment or training.
- The New Zealand government should investigate the benefits of providing financial additional support to NGOs to allow them to employ members of the resettled communities as Community Guides, navigators and support people.
- Work with Housing New Zealand and real estate agencies to promote better housing outcomes by understanding needs and anxieties of new arrivals (e.g. certification of former refugee friendly agency)
- Investigate the option and benefits of increasing the length of support for former refugees. The current policy of providing support for 6 months to 1 year in New Zealand is not empirically based.

- New Zealand government should investigate the practicalities of supporting key NGOs to be located in one building, in the various resettlement areas, for the benefit of client access to a range of services in one place thereby making it easier for new arrival families and individual communities to access the services.
- Develop closer links between national and local government in supporting the resettlement of humanitarian entrants and encourage more collaboration in developing a strategic and operational approach.

3.0 Background information

I have been working as an advocate, and a voice on behalf of the resettled population, raising awareness through my community leadership role, for 11 years. In 2013, we had a community consultation in Auckland, with 11 different ethnic communities, and over 189 participants from refugee backgrounds. The consultation was focused on immigration, housing, employment, health, education, youth, and women's issues, and sought to improve resettlement outcomes. The top priorities identified were employment and housing, and these were seen as core to successful resettlement outcomes. The lack of employment opportunities for many newcomer communities remains an ongoing challenge in Auckland, New Zealand.

Before arriving in New Zealand, the humanitarian entrants (refugee quota intake) received initial information about New Zealand, its way of life and culture. The offshore orientation programme is designed to provide basic information once a refugee accepts the offer to resettle in New Zealand. The programme delivers different information on the resettlement process, including what happens on the journey and the services they will receive on arrival. Many of the humanitarian entrants arrive with high expectations and are eager to begin a new life. After the six weeks reception orientation programme about the different services, at Mangere Resettlement Centre (MRC), the new arrivals will move to their resettlement location with the support of New Zealand Red Cross for a further 6 to 12 months.

Resettlement is one of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) durable solutions for refugees' protection, when they are seeking safety in their second country of asylum. New Zealand has been receiving refugees since World War II and has had a long-term resettlement commitment to refugees coming to the country. Therefore, the New Zealand government and service providers in the resettlement sector have obligations and responsibilities to design appropriate pathways and transition programmes that lead to positive and successful integration outcomes for the families and community members experiencing struggles and challenges in finding employment. However, many still face new social and economic challenges because of issues around English language, isolation, barriers to employment, and access to support services.

Recognition and acknowledgment are two very powerful words in the human life cycle. When you see, or witness, problems of living in the society you must do something about it. This is a valuable contribution to the society you are living in and love. I undertook this research because I wanted to gain experience and skills. The learning from it will allow me to be part of

the solution in the resettlement and integration process in New Zealand. Eger, (2017) noted that “you can’t change what happened, you can’t change what you did or what was done to you, but you can choose how to live now”. What I want to see is that in continuing the support for humanitarian entrants the way forward for newcomers to New Zealand will be a positive and rewarding experience. To achieve this, I want all of those involved in the sector to be open to new ideas, and to be prepared to make any necessary changes.

Appendix A details my own resettlement journey experience, before, during and after coming to New Zealand under the humanitarian entrants (Quota refugee) category. As a victim of civil war and a survivor of human abuse I experienced huge sacrifices and ongoing struggles finding a job as a newcomer. However, on the other hand, it is important to acknowledge and appreciate the opportunity New Zealand offered with regards to a new lifestyle and being able to contribute as a positive citizen. As a proud South Sudanese New Zealander, I am both an example and evidence of how new Kiwis can add value to New Zealand society. I have been able to serve as a Kaitiaki for the wider resettlement community, and be an advocate for the minority voice, addressing the resettlement issues in New Zealand and offering up solutions.



Sabir, Manasseh, and I at Footscray Multicultural market having a lunch at Khartoum Center Restaurant. Melbourne, March 28, 2017

4.0 Introduction

“If in these later years of a life lived in pursuit of equality, we can at last look upon our own country as one in which citizens, regardless of race, gender or creed, share equal political rights and opportunities for development, we do so with great gratitude toward the millions upon millions all around the world who materially and morally supported our struggle for freedom and justice” (Nelson Mandela, 2000).

As can be seen from the comment above of the Nelson Mandela, New Zealanders are proud of their international humanitarian work of supporting refugees and recognise that those who have resettled in New Zealand have contributed positively to New Zealand society. To support former refugees in New Zealand, it is crucial to find strategies and practices that will improve resettlement outcomes in the areas of employment and housing.

Refugees are defined as the most vulnerable population in the world, needing protection. (UNHCR, 2011). A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee because of threats of persecution, war and lacks the protection of their own country. They are humanitarian migrants different from economic migrants, who willingly leave their country of origin for many reasons such as employment, family reunification, marriage or study. The findings of this research will be of value in helping to bring new perspectives, and provide the opportunity to get fresh ideas, that may be of positive benefit to all parties working in the New Zealand resettlement sector.

The aim of this research is to find strategies and practices that will improve resettlement outcomes for employment and housing in New Zealand. The objective of the research was to engage with key actors in the resettlement sector target participants (i.e., government, NGOs, and community) in Melbourne and Sydney in Australia, and learn about their knowledge and experiences, and to disseminate new insights to the resettlement sector in New Zealand.

This study concentrated on the roles of the three main actors in the resettlement process, i.e. Government agencies, NGOs, and resettled communities. Participants were asked to identify their experiences with regard to housing and employment opportunities and give their opinions on the factors that needed to be addressed to achieve better outcomes in these areas. In addition, they were asked for opinions on the resettlement orientation programme, covering access to support services, individual needs assessment on arrival and appropriate training and networking.

Thinking strategically is a way forward to encourage positive social changes in humanitarian resettlement. The study outcomes will go some way to opening opportunities and healing broken hearts and identifying opportunities New Zealand offers to newcomers. Humanitarian issues in both Australia and New Zealand need the right people with the appropriate tools and levels of understanding. The key to successful resettlement and integration is in providing employment opportunities for those within the newcomer communities.

It was a positive experience spending one month in Australia, meeting new people with skills and experience in the resettlement sector, including government officials, NGOs and community leaders and representatives. The research attempted to find some answers and suggestions that would benefit the resettlement sector in New Zealand. The outcomes of this study encourage a better three-way communication with a different level of collaboration between government agencies themselves, NGOs themselves, community organisations themselves and all three bodies collaborate together for the benefit of the newcomer communities in New Zealand.

Level 5, 255 Williams Street, Flagstaff office, Melbourne, Victoria

James, Orito and I at Dr Melika Yassin office, Melbourne on 31 March 2017



The Multicultural Affairs and Social Cohesion (MASC) at the Department of Premier and Cabinet building. The photos out and inside the building I visited on 30 March 2017.

3/3 Treasury Place, Melbourne, Victoria 3001



Young Aucklanders, Kiwis migrant Nuedin, Yonas and I having a dinner, Melbourne on 30 March 2017.



5.0 Methodology

In April 2017, I spent one month in Australia, visiting Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra, to carry out my research project which explored the experiences of how humanitarian migrants settled in Australia, and how this experience compared with similar groups in New Zealand.

I selected Melbourne and Sydney because they are the largest settlement locations in Australia, resettling humanitarian arrivals in large numbers and in this respect similar to Auckland. While I was in Sydney I took the opportunity to make a brief visit to Canberra to gain more information.

5.1 Participants

I visited a number of organisations (Appendix B) that provide direct services for humanitarian entrants. These organisations included government departments, NGOs and resettled communities in Melbourne, Sydney and also Canberra. Over the course of the research I talked with a range of experienced people in the resettlement sector during visits arranged and coordinated by Adult Migrant English Services (AMES) Australia and my own existing professional network in Australia.

Selected participants were matched against the following criteria;(i) be Australian citizens or eligible to work in Australia; (ii) living in Melbourne, Sydney or Canberra; (iii) male or female aged 18 years and over, (iv) working for refugee resettlement programmes of government departments or NGOs, (v) humanitarian entrant (i.e., former refugees) leaders and representatives; (v) individual community leaders or representatives who arrived in Australia through humanitarian entrant's categories.

Informed consent was obtained from 20 interviewees during 13 interviews. (Appendix C)

5.2 Data collection

Information was obtained through individual interviews, focus group discussions, formal and informal group discussions. The formal interviews and focus group discussions were recorded, having confirmed this was acceptable to those involved and lasted approximately between 50 to 60 minutes. These were later transcribed and available for participants to see if they so desired. The discussions were face-to-face and carried out in English, with most taking place at participants' homes and offices.

6.0 Key learnings from the trip

1. In Australia each state has their own reception centre whilst in New Zealand there is one location for all the seven regions.
2. New arrivals are welcomed by their community, and NGOs, from the airport and immediately taken into to the community, whilst in New Zealand they are welcomed at the airport by the government, represented by Immigration New Zealand officers, and taken to Mangere Resettlement Centre (MRC).
3. Initial accommodation in Australia is within the community whilst in New Zealand it is at the Mangere Resettlement Centre.
4. Australian federal government, state government and local government have demonstrated coordination and networking toward resettlement outcomes.
5. The AMES Australia carries out six community consultations a year for community engagement with different government departments include taxation department, immigration, and housing agencies.
6. The Australian government and NGOs work together on a tiered level of support that responds to the need of the people who are seeking employment.
7. Employment Officers and Housing Officers, from resettled community, are employed by local NGOs.
8. People from a humanitarian background were able to access a range of services from one location.

Abulla, Team Leader of SydWest Multicultural Services and I during interview on 12 April 2017.



Sydney

South Sudanese Community leaders in Sydney Emmanuel Kendok and his team three youth leaders and community leader and I after interview on 12 April 2017.



7.0 Findings from the Research

The following two questions were asked to obtain information on the participants' involvement in the resettlement sector and get their opinions on the factors in achieving better employment and housing outcomes.

- i) What roles do organisations (e.g. government agencies, non-government organisations, and community organisations) play in dealing with employment and housing issues in refugee resettlement?
- ii) In your opinion, what are important factors in achieving better resettlement outcomes in employment and housing?

7.1 What roles organisations (e.g., government agencies, non-government organisations, and community organisations) play in dealing with employment and housing issues in refugee resettlement?

I engaged in face to face interviews with participants on the question about their agency/organisation role in refugee resettlement in Australia. Participants were asked to share their experience on what role their organisation played, focusing on employment and housing. Each group identified their role in the different stages of the resettlement process, e.g.

- Resettlement Orientation Programme
- Employment
- Housing

7.1.1 Government role in refugee resettlement

Resettlement orientation programme

When asked on the Australian government role in 'refugee resettlement', with regard to employment and housing issues, participants highlighted two main stages that the government plays in the resettlement process, including offshore and onshore. These two stages are designed for refugee's resettlement orientation as one of the AMES Australian managers said;

“Australia is a committed nation to resettled refugees in their country because they see human needs and benefits in having them”. (AMES Australia Manager, Melbourne).

The Australian government official and NGO participants acknowledged the Australian government experienced complex issues involved in the resettlement process, both onshore and post resettlement. Therefore, they work hard with NGOs and resettled communities to overcome resettlement challenges; one agency cannot do it alone.

Offshore orientation programme;

This was designed to facilitate and coordinate necessary assistance for refugees' transition between the UNHCR local office in a country of asylum and the Australian government. Australia's offshore orientation programme is an important initial process in refugee resettlement. In this stage a refugee has legal status, changing from that of a refugee to holding an Australian permanent resident visa once the refugee is accepted for resettlement in Australia.

They are no longer a refugee. They are Australian residents. Also, refugees receive information about employment and housing in Australia as part of the Australian Cultural Orientation Program for refugees who have been accepted to resettle in Australia.

“Our government provides visa, and travel costs to refugees offshore” (AMES Australian Manager)

“Our government received referral cases of refugees from UNHCR for resettlement consideration in Australia. Before referral UNHCR assesses a person as a genuine refugee for resettlement. The Australian government officials will make a second check for eligibility to live in Australia. After consideration and eligibility, the selection mission will travel overseas to the country where refugees are either in the cities or refugee camps for interview.” (AMES Australian Manager)

The Australian government representatives emphasised their government is aware of the challenges that new arrival humanitarian entrants face. Therefore, they are doing their best to ensure newcomer communities have jobs and affordable housing, working together with NGOS.

Onshore orientation programme

The Australian government’s commitment is clear that every new arrival who was formerly a refugee should have a better life in Australia with the help of a mix of service providers. At this stage the mix of service providers, including government agencies, NGOs and community organisations collaborate, develop partners and networking. These key actors deliver onshore orientation program providing humanitarian settlement services programmes. These related programmes include Social Welfare and Health Care Eligibility (Buchanan, 2016). The government provides funding to NGOs to deliver different resettlement services including an Adult Migrant English Programme and an Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors Programme, Education and Financial Management.

The Australian government officials and NGO participants agreed that the Australian government works hard to make the process work based on shared values. The Settlement Council of Australia (SCOA) developed National Settlement Service Outcomes Standards “Outcome: migrants and new arrival communities effectively settle and integrate into the Australia community (SCOA, 2015).”

Employment

Centrelink is an Australian government department that delivers a range of government payments and services to Australian citizens and residents (e.g. retirees, families, the unemployed, carers, people with disabilities, parents) and provides services at times of major change. Government employees and front-line managers there, were well qualified and competent to assist individuals eligible to receive social welfare support, according to their level of knowledge and experience. Their needs are identified clearly with specific recommendations to pathways to employment or training. The result of individual needs assessments is listed under three streams:

Stream A: Job seeker, job ready although would benefit from agencies support to find a job

Stream B: Job seeker, few more barriers to remove before ready for employment; need more training

Stream C. Job seeker eligible to receive more support because they have more barriers to overcome before suitable for employment.

Participants agreed that when it comes to employment the Australian government is committed to providing the necessary resources and tools for new communities. The government promotes a multicultural society, reflected in all government departments and across NGO and private's sectors. Participants acknowledged that diversity in Australia is an economic accelerator.

“Our government provides funding contracts to local and National NGOs to deliver employment services (e.g., Job Active,) “our organisation, AMES Australia have federal and state employment contracts for our services” (AMES Australia regional client relationship manager).

“Having a job is a key factor for successful resettlement of former refugees” (AMES Australia regional client relationship manager).

Some newcomers highlighted experiences of struggle and financial hardship during the resettlement journey to Australia. Reflecting on fleeing their country of origin and ending up in a second country (country of asylum) staying there for many years waiting for resettlement either in a camp or city. Arriving in Australia was a relief from the struggle, but some experienced lack of job opportunities based on their background.

Housing

On arrival government agencies, in collaboration with NGOs, provide state housing or private housing. The first accommodation on arrival is emergency or short-term accommodation for 28 days within a community. Then the NGO's housing officers will arrange long term accommodation in the selected location of resettlement for new arrivals.

The obvious challenges new arrivals face in finding houses were references for rent and lack of financial saving or any other viable assets.

7.1.2 NGOs role in refugee resettlement

The NGOs role is very important in the resettlement process as it acts as a bridge and connection between government, as funders, and the communities as service receivers. They deliver direct resettlement services and they engage with humanitarian entrants through different levels of service provision. Participants reflected on their experiences of the agencies on employment and housing issues as detailed below.

Resettlement orientation programme

The Australian NGOs are the first point of contact in the onshore orientation programme for any new humanitarian entrant (refugee quota intake). They welcome new arrivals at the Airport and they liaise with existing communities in Australia where the new arrivals will feel welcome in Australia, amongst those with the same cultural backgrounds or communities who speak the same languages.

The orientation programme involves other services such as health, education, English, bank and social welfare systems. These services come with appropriate cultural support, language and any other necessary resettlement information needed. As this study focuses on the employment and housing issues the key learning points are noted below.

Employment

Australian NGOs have different programmes that help newcomers to gain employment as soon as they have been assessed by Centrelink Services.

“Our organisation delivers resettlement services for the new arrivals in Australia, but we have different contracts as well as employment services, and these are the national employment services contracts, including Job Active, Job Services Australia and Job Network. So, the organisation has different business areas, and we try to integrate these areas to support the client’s resettlement journey from basically that point when they arrive at the airport through to being able to contribute to the Australia society through gaining meaningful employment” (AMES Australia Manager).

Participants (managers and case officers) described how they dealt with job search clients. Practical assistance is a real step by step operational process to assess a newcomer’s situation. There is a scoring system which is a questionnaire, called the ‘Job Seeker Classification Instrument (JSCI)’. Centrelink will use that assessment tool to refer the client to other employment services, e.g. Adult Migrant English Services. They do that through a coordination tool called ‘Referral Pathways and Referral Protocols’ used by case managers in Centrelink.

The employment service agencies will repeat the same assessment as conducted by Centrelink to ensure the person is placed in the right category of job search. The job search comes with three streams as set out below:

- **Stream A:** Job seeker is somebody that basically has been assessed by Centrelink as quite job ready. They require minimal assistance to get them into employment (*e.g.* generally, these clients speak relatively good English, they have some recent work experience, or some transferable skills. They would be quite ready to move into the employment market).
- **Stream B:** Job seekers who have been assessed as having a few more barriers to overcome to get employment (*e.g.* they are people that potentially don’t speak as much English; they may have a few other barriers, such as being a single mother with young children).

- **Stream C:** Job seekers who are eligible to receive more support because they have more barriers to employment. Basically, it is a skill, strength-based approach. So, it aims to focus on what do the clients have rather than what they don't have. What is transferable? Can qualifications be recognised? So that if they do have overseas qualifications, they can either have it recognised here through appropriate recognition units or can look at getting into a course that could bring them up to speed in Australia in that industry. Once those skills gaps are addressed they can then move into employment.

The role of NGOs within a Job Active contract is to help job seekers move into the employment market to earn some type of income.

“Sometimes it might not necessarily be their dream job. But it would be a way for them to earn some type of income” (AMES Australia Regional Client Relationship Manager, Melbourne).

If they need to continue studying, they will be able to work and study to achieve their future goals.

This is an important stage for a new humanitarian entrant to a new country to be assessed appropriately for their resettlement basic needs, concentrating on employability. The above three streams are a great tool to identify individual needs focusing on the skills, education, and experience they bring with them. Therefore, resettlement service providers and their partners work alongside each other to coordinate referral systems that will enable measurement of the resettlement outcomes based on the pathway transition mechanism.

“Australian systems lead to positive contributions by former refugees in work places and our government invests in them. Therefore, we establish community capacity building for active leaders in the different communities. We call it the ‘community guide’ programme and it is very successful. I don't know how it's doing in New Zealand, but here community guides are now team leaders; they are case managers; they are working in different fields. Their input has been acknowledged and many of the people have got transferable skills, whether they come to Australia from an urban background, from the countryside or refugee camps” (AMES Australia Manager).

Housing

On arrival it is a dream for every newcomer to have a place to live, provided by the Australian NGOs. NGO participants acknowledged that some newcomers miss out on accessible housing information due to delays in the integration process.

The Australian government representatives acknowledged the importance of the role of the NGOs in providing housing assistance. On arrival the humanitarian entrants (quota refugee intake) arrive with no money in their pocket, no savings and lack of financial security. That is why the NGOs act on behalf of the new arrivals because they don't have any experience of renting or local references which real estate agents need as part of the tenancy agreement.

7.1.3 Resettled Community role in resettlement

The role of the community is very important for newcomers and making connections on arrival to be welcomed by an existing resettled community is a very positive move. Introducing newcomers to their own community or ethnic background, makes a huge difference by making them feel welcome and at home with people they can trust. The first contact point to explore job opportunities starts at the community level, establishing network and understanding the environment better. In each resettled community the aim is to have a community leader or guide that understands the resettlement process for cultural organisations thereby helping integration. They are well experienced on resettlement issues and they have managed situations about these issues more than many agencies in the resettlement sector. The main challenge they face is lack of enough resources to build on their capabilities.

Participants highlighted the concern about the disadvantages of coming to a new home. The new environment, together with new challenges such as law enforcement, make it difficult for newcomers and resettled communities to adopt easily, especially those who have come from rural areas and refugee camps. The host community expects the new settlers to adjust to their new life without appreciating the difficulties they face in understanding and awareness. such as family law, women rights, children rights, and policies that are different from their own culture.

Employment

Many participants highlighted the importance of having a job in that it provided a sense of being able to support their family and rebuilding a new life from nothing.

“On my arrival it was hard to find a job but after engaging with community and employment agencies I found my first job in Australia through a community member not employment agencies. Although, it wasn’t the job I am looking for. But, I found out it was important to have a first job in any career to gain Australia local work experience which opened doors for me to my current job” (Chway, Canberra).

Participants highlighted that there are many job opportunities in Australia, although it is hard for some communities to access them because they are not aware of them. Therefore, community leaders are aware that some families and community members still experience struggles and challenges in finding employment. There is at times a lack of motivation to use the support system in place and also an ongoing mindset and stigma of receiving Centrelink support as part of UNHCR support in refugee camps. These issues emerge as ongoing socio-economic factors through the resettlement and integration process (e.g. English language, isolation, appropriate training, networking and access to support services). These are barriers to employment.

“Finding employment opportunity is about who you know not about what you know” (SSI employment officer, Sydney).

Many participants talked positively about getting their first job in Australia through networking and people they know, not through employment agencies. On the other hand, they are aware

of the high numbers of community members, especially single parents, unemployed because of the image and reputation of their background. Host society labelling, stereotyping and racism is often associated with the word refugee.

Housing

The housing process for individual families or community members has many things that need to be considered such as references and previous rental records for the tenancy agreement. Many humanitarian entrants arrive with large families, and the definition of the family in Australia and New Zealand contexts is different. The family there is considered as husband and wife with two to three children; if it is large maybe four children, compared to families with five to eight plus a number of close relatives. Housing tenancy agreements come with responsibilities and many new arrivals do not understand they have a lawful obligation to the landlord. Therefore, management of the property and house contents such as light (electrical) water, everything in the house costs money.

“If I have the right information on my arrival about housing I may get my own house early. But, I am glad I got one after seven years not paying rent but paying a mortgage” (AMES Australia Orientation Coordinator).

The participant commented that after living in the new home about five to ten years, resettled individuals should pay mortgage not rent, with help from service providers.

“While we pay rent, we will not own the house in the long term, losing money. It will be better if you pay the mortgage and own the house in the long term” (AMES Australia Orientation Coordinator).

He understood that not everyone could afford to buy a house after only a short period of resettlement. This process depends on the information passed on to the newcomers about finance and the process of buying a house.



Sim and I visiting Opera house in Sydney on 8 April 2017



Anita and I at central Sydney 6 April 2017



Multicultural Services Building

Abann with housing and employment officers from Settlement Services International (SSI) at Multicultural Services. Level 2/125 Main St, Blacktown NSW 2148, Australia



7.1. 4 Other key learnings related to resettlement

I experienced other key learnings during my engagement with resettlement service participants in Australia through discussion and observation in a different work-related environment. The humanitarian needs are inter-connected when it comes to settling in the new country. These primary factors include English language, driver license, local experience, qualifications, and networking. Other secondary factors include; the colour of skin, society's acceptance, relationships with neighbours, relatives, isolation, the social economic cycle, and lack of understanding the systems. Coming from a humanitarian migrant background myself these factors are not new to me, but they have a direct influence on employment and housing outcomes.

I experienced genuine collaboration between two organizations in Sydney. For example, Settlement Services International (SSI) and SydWest Multicultural Services are working together and collaborating with humanitarian entrants and other migrant clients. The SSI employment offices and housing offices work closely with the community receiving new arrivals. SSI works with a client for six-months and SydWest Multicultural Services will take over through a referral system and their service is available for five years. Not just employment and housing cases but all the resettlement support services in their region. At the same time, SSI and SydWest Multicultural Services operate in the same building making it easier for new arrival families and individual communities to access the services in one place. I was very excited observing people being able to access the services in one place; it was a very encouraging model of practice.

The community and NGOs participants in this study strongly highlighted an important point for some community members who have a problem with Australian law. On arrival, the information about law enforcement, rights and responsibilities and the police role in the society were received but it was not enough.

“Working with a client who has a bad record or trouble with police is very hard to find a job or renting a house” (SSI Employment officer, Sydney).

Mostly these clients came from a dysfunctional family, with violence or broken marriage, due to resettlement challenges. Managing expectations, financial hardship and the culture shock are three major factors contributing to losing hope and resilience which creates stress, and disagreement in the family. Many families have been separated by police, but the police are there to prevent violence not to solve the problem.

The following are examples from my discussions that contributed to dysfunctional families in the resettlement process such as;

- a) Family role shifting without appropriate tools for adjustment,
- b) Lack of understanding of the social welfare support system use of the money,
- c) Pressure from relatives and family back home demanding money,
- d) Many marriages had husband and wife in disagreement, resulting in violence and separation, and in this relationship, children became victims often ending up on the street or in jail,

- e) Gap between husband and wife, in education and age, likely to result in a big problem in the new home,
- f) Large size of family members with extended family and relatives,
- g) A majority of single parents as an impact of war.

7.2 Important factors in achieving better resettlement outcomes in employment and housing.

In this second question the participants were asked to share their opinion on common factors in achieving better resettlement outcomes, focusing on employment and housing. The service providers NGOs and government agencies strongly identified themes that were similar to community participants. The following findings were common themes across employment and housing;

- **Access to support services**
- **Host society perception receiving refugees**
- **Intercultural Communication**

Participants opinions again highlighted the two different experiences offshore and onshore. The new factors onshore include survivor responsibilities recovering from experiencing loss of family members in war, torture, and trauma, and human right abuse. These factors need a healing process in the resettlement and integration process. In addition, lack of suitable jobs, families experiencing separation, isolation, problems with law and most importantly long periods of time with no job in the country of asylum and resettlement country. These factors easily develop stress, anxiety and mental problems. The Australian government tries its best to resettle humanitarian migrants, but some people still struggle adapting to the new system.

7.2.1 Access to support services

Access to support services is a key component of any resettlement support system and a welcoming opportunity for new arrival communities. All participants agreed that finding a job and a house to live in are a dream of every new arrival. At the core of accessing services is information sharing, connection, networking and awareness of available services in the community and amongst service providers. There are two ways newcomers can access services in Australia with regards to finding employment opportunities and housing information. These are, i.e. (a) mainstream services for all Australian residents and (b) special resettlement support services for humanitarian newcomer communities.

AMES Australia, community orientation coordinator in Melbourne shared his view on the ongoing orientation programme in the community;

“I think from an organisational point of view, the best thing for a former refugee regardless of their education level, is a comprehensive orientation; it is very essential for them. For example, orientation can be about employment pathways, it can be about the education system, health system and Australia’s legal advice, or legal issues. This comprehensive orientation will prevent them from having so many problems, such as

family violence, and such as no access to legal system, such as unable to use the emergency services” (Team Leader from SydWest Multicultural Services, Sydney).

“We take newcomers around to access to the services available in their area. The first thing in Australia I think is that everywhere it’s not the matter of availability, it’s the matter of accessibility. There are so many services available, but not everyone knows how to access them. So, a third party should be involved, either our organisation or a community organisation, or a friend or a link, or sponsor or anyone to take them to access to those services.” (Team Leader from SydWest Multicultural Services, Sydney).

7.2.2 Employment

NGOs in Sydney suggested accessing services played a big role in connecting new arrivals, former refugees, with employers.

“We had one of our new arrival clients from Iraq with skills, experience and knowledge and he was aware about what he wanted. We helped him connect with the University in Sydney and after weeks trial teaching he got a full-time teaching job” (Employment Officer from SSI, Sydney).

This case is one example of a new arrival former refugee who came with knowledge and experience. It’s about recognition and acknowledgment of individual abilities and what they can bring or contribute to their new home. Also, finding a job is about employers understanding how an individual can contributed to their business.

To access employment in Australia and get into the labour force, often one thing that they will ask is about having a driver license.

“At SydWest, we put two programmes to address this issue. One Driving Knowledge Test (DKT) practice and then we teach them about the rules, the law, the signs, and everything they need to achieve an Australian driver’s license. And after that, we help them to get a license. Once they get the learner’s driver license, we have a car, to enable them to practice. Many people had driven where they came from, which is good, but the Australian government may not recognise their driver’s license” (Team Leader from SydWest Multicultural Services, Sydney)

“We have another programme that helps those with multiple problems which we call Complex Case Support (CCS). They cannot be treated and assisted in the normal resettlement program and so this is a special programme. Complex Case Support is for someone who has got things like mental health, housing, socialisation and other such issues. The support includes home visits to assist them to address the fundamental problems that they are facing. So those are the things, but you must work very hard. There is nothing that you can take for granted in this country.” (Team Leader from SydWest Multicultural Services, Sydney)

The community participants in Melbourne highlighted overlapping messages received by new arrivals accessing employment opportunities. Different messages from different sources create confusion for newcomer communities.

“On my arrival 10 years ago, I received advice from community members, NGOs and government agencies. I was confused who I should believe in accessing services to find a job. The only support I received was from a community guide who helped me out and I trusted them more than any of the other community outreach services.” (Zakaria, Melbourne)

Community participants across Australia highlighted their different experiences finding employment opportunities. Having unusual names is very hard, especially if you look different through the colour of your skin, cultural background; many put inappropriate labelling or used inappropriate language. Other barriers are being over qualified or when you have high qualifications not recognised and are without local work experience and local qualifications. Also, often needed is a clean driving licence and reliable transport.

In life everyone needs a job to support themselves. In Sydney young people from South Sudanese community voiced their concern that after study they find it is very hard for some of them to find a job.

“I was a leader for my community, tried to encourage young people to go back to education which is an opportunity Australia offers. They responded by telling me I am an educated person without job and I am saying education is the key to life. Thank you, uncle for the advice and let me ask you. Now you have an Australian high qualification a degree and a master’s degree. You don’t have a job? Why should we waste our time? Education is nothing in this country. Young people can’t cope with the hardship; they feel rejected by the system with many on the streets and in jail. It is very sad.” (Director from Cush family day care, Melbourne).

“We as young people know that after study there will be a problem of finding a job. And finding a job is about who you know not about what you know. Also, when you look different and come from a different culture with a different name it is a problem in Australia.” (Youth voice from South Sudanese community, Sydney).

One of the NGOs participant from the AMES Australia organisation in Melbourne described difficulties dealing with different cultures;

“We are dealing with many cultures via one system, and majority of the new arrivals have challenges to understanding the new way of life.” (AMES Australia Manager)

7. 2.3 Housing

Access to housing services for former refugees is through support from the resettlement services and the mainstream support system. But, the housing issues remain as challenges for new arrivals and some community members. As mentioned below by a Team Leader from SydWest Multicultural Services organisation in Sydney;

“Housing is one of the things that is very important in human life. And, it’s not about just helping them to apply, but to give them foundation, understanding about Australian tenancy system. In addition to that, we also run information sessions about these things, everything costs money in the house. Water, electricity, all those things. Therefore, we give them, education at the same time. Electricity, or light, is going together with people. Where the people are, is where the light is. You don’t need to put on light where there is nobody there. Light is going together with people.”

One of the community participants in Melbourne from Afghan community shared his experience buying a house in Australia.

“As a former refugee when I arrived in Australia, I didn’t know how to buy a house, and buying a house, it was a dream for me. Because I didn’t know anything about the process, and everything. The only thing I knew was, how much is this house? Oh it’s \$600,000 or something like that. As the time passed by, I could see my friend who came into Australia like few years ago and he bought a house. I asked myself a question How is it possible for him and not for me? This made me curious to find the way. I started searching for information and requirement of buying a house. I got a job, I got the payslip, this should help me with the 10% of deposit money I need for a house. There is nobody who can pay all those several thousand monies at the same time. There is a bank system that you can borrow money and they will pay for you and you will pay mortgage. (Afghan Community, Melbourne).

“After few years of planning I bought a house. Because anyway, when you are in Australia, you either must pay mortgage or you must pay rent. Why instead of paying a rent why not pay a mortgage? This is very simple way how we explain for our community members who would like to change their life and they get encouraged to settle very successfully.” (Community Orientation Coordinator from AMES Australia, Melbourne).

7.2.4 Host society perception receiving refugees

Australia is one of the world resettlement states with a genuine, positive intention to saving lives. They are offering protection for the most vulnerable populations in the world, victims of a humanitarian crises. Many arrived with hope, resilience and high expectations, of a new home (house, family and community) to overcome their resettlement journey experience. They hope to establish new life and restore their image and dignity they have lost through the journey. Unfortunately, the other side of the story is that they face a new challenge which wasn’t expected by many of them.

There are two sides of the challenge; firstly, the host society not seeing the newcomers as human resources because of a lack of awareness and understanding of the background, culture and issues faced by former refugees. Secondly former refugees face multiple new challenges in the resettlement and integration process in understanding Australia systems. Resettled communities try their best to adapt to their new home and Australian systems, including justice system, police system, social welfare system, education system, health system, media system,

public services, NGOs, private sector, real estate and civil society. This process in adjusting to a new life requires a new way in dealing with humanitarian issues effectively, by designing better policies, programmes and tools that involve everyone in the process of the development with attention of having genuine partnerships and collaboration between agencies.

One community group shared discussions on the host society view on their communities;

“Many of us here from African Countries in Melbourne, some of us living in the past dealing with overseas (country of origin) politics due to isolation and process of resettlement and integration to host society. We are not supporting ourselves and the system of Australia is not helping either, we stuck life very hard.” (Zakaria, Melbourne).

The host community expect all the former refugees should follow their new life adjustment when it comes to housing. Former refugee families can arrive with a large number of children compared to Australian families. Therefore, real estate agents, housing agencies and landlords have challenges dealing with former refugees.

7.2.5 Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication is one of the key elements and is important in the refugee resettlement process which involves host society culture and the newcomers ‘different cultures coming together. The participants agreed that communication is a way of expressing ourselves to each other, learning and socialising, including verbal and non-verbal; both are very vital in the resettlement context. Culture has been defined according to Magee (201). “We learn our culture very early, by being told, by observing others and by having our mistakes corrected. Constantly changing and evolving, culture is both visible and invisible, conscious and unconscious. It is the mental programming that helps us to make sense of the world”.

The service providers experienced differences between people who lived in (i) refugee camps or rural areas and (ii) urban refugees; these are two very different categories. Those who come from refugee camps and rural areas have a more limited education background and it is often very hard for them to adjust easily to a new life (e.g. language barriers, qualification, previous work experience and waiting time in the camp). The urban refugees arrive with more experience of living in a city and more easily adjust to a new life (e.g. active and self-motivated to participate in volunteering, study and work). Therefore, individual needs assessment is very important. The refugees who come from a camp and rural area need more support than the urban refugees.

8.0 Comparison of key findings in relation to New Zealand

My aim was to benchmark the refugee resettlement programme in New Zealand against that of Australia, focussing on Melbourne and Sydney. These two major states in Australia are the biggest cities in terms of population. Sydney's population alone, at the 2016 Australian census, reached 5 million people followed by Melbourne with a population of approximately 4.8 million. These population figures of the two states highlight clearly the differences with New Zealand. The New Zealand population as a country was approximately only 4.7 million in 2016.

Australia has six states, Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania. When it comes to refugee resettlement in Australia, Melbourne and Sydney have the highest numbers of resettled refugees. The Australian government and NGOs at national, state and local level are involved in the overall refugee resettlement process. The government involvement starts offshore (overseas) with selection process and a cultural orientation programme. The Australian government works in partnership with UNHCR through referral of refugee cases for resettlement consideration in Australia. Australia has a commitment as one of the largest resettlement countries in the world who signed the 1951 convention, and its 1967 protocol relating to the status of refugees (UNHCR, 2011). Australia receives an annual refugee quota programme of 13,750 refugees for resettlement plus additional numbers in response to humanitarian crises. New Zealand receives an annual quota of 750 refugees for resettlement includes 150 places for family reunification. New Zealand is considering increasing the refugee quota from 750 to 1000 places for a year.

The Australian refugee resettlement process offshore that provides a cultural orientation programme is very similar to that of New Zealand. The differences I found throughout my trip were a) selection criteria in term of refugee resettlement acceptance, b) Onshore reception programme, c) Scale of the resources available for newcomer communities, d) Size of the service providers and numbers of new arrivals annually and e) the length and period of services to humanitarian migrants.

Australia and New Zealand don't accept all refugees for resettlement and not all refugees qualified for resettlement. The recommendation and referral completed by UNHCR leads to a further assessment based on criteria. These criteria have been reviewed by the Australian Government Department of Social Services and not every refugee will be eligible for resettlement in Australia. There are seven categories or criteria used by UNHCR to select refugees for resettlement worldwide according to Karlsen (2016):

1. Legal and/or Physical Protection Needs of the refugee in the country of refuge
2. Survivors of Torture and/or Violence, where repatriation or the conditions of asylum could result in further traumatization and/or heightened risk, or where appropriate treatment is not available

3. Medical Needs, in particular life-saving treatment that is unavailable in the country of refuge
4. Women and Girls at Risk, who have protection problems particular to their gender
5. Family Reunification, when resettlement is the only means to reunite refugee family members who, owing to refugee flight or displacement, are separated by borders or entire continents
6. Children and Adolescents at Risk, where a best interests determination supports resettlement, and
7. Lack of Foreseeable Alternative Durable Solutions, which generally is relevant only when other solutions are not feasible in the foreseeable future, when resettlement can be used strategically, and/or when it can open possibilities for comprehensive solutions

The table below compares the Australian refugee resettlement programme with that of New Zealand.

Table 1: Australia and New Zealand comparison on refugee resettlement programme

AUSTRALIA-MELBOURNE AND SYDNEY	NEW ZEALAND
OFFSHORE ORIENTATION PROGRAMME	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial case referral to Australia for resettlement consideration by UNHCR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial case referral to New Zealand for resettlement consideration by UNHCR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The selection criteria base on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refugee (visa subclass 200) - In-country special humanitarian (visa subclass 201) - Emergency rescue (subclass 203) - Woman at risk (subclass 204) interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The selection criteria base on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Woman at risk - Emergency cases - Medical attention and disability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance case for resettlement will be referred to UNHCR resettlement branch for medical screening and travel arrangements with the support of International Organisation for Migration (IOM) for travel assistance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance case for resettlement will be referred to UNHCR resettlement branch for medical screening and travel arrangements with the support of International Organisation for Migration (IOM) for travel assistance.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The aim of the delivery of cultural orientation programme before arrival to Australia and New Zealand quite similar and it is designed to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare a new comer for travel to Australia and New Zealand - Help with how the person will settle in Australia and New Zealand - Help the person to be realistic about what they can expect of life in Australia and New Zealand - Provide information about Australian and New Zealand laws, values and lifestyle - Introduce and get to know other people who will also be travelling to Australia and New Zealand. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of legal status from refugee to permanent resident visa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of legal status from refugee to permanent resident visa
ONSHORE RECEPTION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive with Permanent Resident Visa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive with Permanent Resident Visa
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First contact point on arrival is the community and NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First contact point on arrival is the Government agency (Immigration New Zealand)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taken from the airport straight to the community; 28 days in short-accommodation or emergency accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taken from the airport to Mangere Resettlement Centre for 6 weeks reception and origination programme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length of the resettlement services are from 6 months, 12 months to 5 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length of the resettlement services are from 6 months, 12 months.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each resettlement state has their own reception for new arrival former refugees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One location Auckland reception for new arrival former refugees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six states include Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven regions include Auckland, Hamilton (Waikato), Palmerston North (Manawatu), Wellington, Christchurch, Nelson and Dunedin.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five years to obtain Australian citizenship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five years to obtain New Zealand citizenship

The two countries comparison in Table 1, highlights the gap of the length of the services, with five years in Australia compared to New Zealand's one year. There are similarities in some areas of the offshore cultural orientation programmes. Both onshore reception programmes, still label the new arrivals as refugees and do not acknowledge their new status of residents. "Words can be like sticks and stones, crude weapons always ready to hand. The use of them requires no skill at all" (Robinson, 2017. P. 70). This can confuse, and influence, the public and other mainstream services in supporting the resettlement process because of lack of awareness and understanding of the background of the humanitarian migrant communities.

Through my observations in Australia and my experience working in the resettlement sector in New Zealand it would appear to me that many resettlement factors and challenges in the areas of affecting employment and housing are the same.

Humanitarian Migrant Communities (refugee quota, family reunification and Asylum)

New factors and challenges onshore

- Lack of local work experience, networking, and qualification
- Having to explain a lot about themselves, where they are from, why they are here?
- Finding suitable jobs on arrival and beyond
- Lack of resources for community organisations to heal themselves through mediation, counselling, mentoring and coaching to their community and family's members

Old factors and challenges offshore

- Waiting period at the country of asylum (refugee camps or urban cities)
- Fear for their life
- Lack of immediate employment opportunities and ability to own a house
- Lack of access to reliable information and public services
- Bullying and discrimination in the country of asylum
- Reputation and image

Host Society (Australia and New Zealand)

- Lack of understanding about the complexity of the former refugee journey
- Public negative assumptions about former refugees
- Media and education institutional promoting their political interests, leading to confusing and influencing public understanding and perception, and the language they use when talking about new the new arrivals.
- Negative labelling

The above factors throw up challenges for both former refugees and the host society. Each group has to make adjustments to ensure positive resettlement. All should try to work together to overcome the obstacles and fill the missing gaps

9.0 Conclusions

It was repeated many times in conversations that the best thing for a former refugee regardless of education level, is a comprehensive orientation programme and there is a question mark over whether or not the one-year resettlement support in New Zealand system is enough, especially for some high need people, i.e. those who have lived in refugee camps for many years and these who have come from rural areas. They face more barriers than most in the resettlement process.

In terms of the New Zealand context there may be a need to seek to improve the existing support services or to develop a pathway transition support system in currently overlooked resettlement domains. Strengthening community voices and resettlement services for the effective reception and integration is an important approach for both the resettled communities and the host society. It was clear Australia has more resources with a larger number of people involved in the resettlement process and service providers are confident on their services they provide. The Australian resettlement services tend to make more use of the experience and learning from former refugees who are employed (e.g. employment officers, Housing offices, case managers, managers and orientation coordinators).

There are benefits of service providers collaborating and working together for the benefit of service receivers. Collaboration is a very important method in the resettlement sector to avoid duplication and competition over the resources on behalf of the resettled population. It will be a great idea for the resettlement services to remind themselves that they are dealing with people with broken hearts who have lost their home, families, and relatives requiring a new start in life. Building relationships, trust and trying to overcome the survivor responsibilities and trauma.

Support services operating in the same building make it easier for new arrival families and individual communities to access the services in one place. I was very excited observing people being able to access the services in one place; it was a very encouraging model of practice.

The public need more awareness about refugee resettlement. The NGOs and community participants highlighted that the Australian public don't have enough confidence in the refugee resettlement process, due to fear, negative media images and general lack of information. The same can be said of New Zealand.

It was evident that one system does not necessarily meet the needs of all.

10.0 Recommendations

The objective of this research was to find strategies and practices that will help improve resettlement outcomes in the areas of employment and housing in New Zealand. The challenges that new arrivals and resettled people face when they come to New Zealand have remained the same for many years. Fewer support gaps exist, or exist to a lesser extent, although there are still significant opportunities to close those gaps further with solutions that haven't yet been identified.

The following recommendations are put forward on how the New Zealand resettlement sector might further develop and improve their resettlement services for newcomers and resettled communities onshore and post resettlement.

- At Mangere Resettlement Centre (MRC) establish a system, similar to that at Centrelink, that on arrival assesses individuals according to their level of knowledge and experience, thereby identifying at an early stage the prior learning of highly qualified and competent people. Identify individual needs at an early stage to make recommendations as to an appropriate pathway to employment or training.
- The New Zealand government should investigate the benefits of providing additional financial support to NGOs to allow them to employ members of the resettled communities as Community Guides, navigators and support people.
- The New Zealand Government should investigate the option and benefits of increasing the length of support for former refugees. The current policy of providing support for 6 months to 1 year in New Zealand is not empirically based.
- Immigration New Zealand and Housing New Zealand should consider the benefits of working more closely with real estate agencies to promote better housing outcomes by understanding needs and anxieties of new arrivals (e.g., certification of former refugee friendly agency)
- New Zealand government should investigate the practicalities of supporting key NGOs to be located in one building, in the various resettlement areas, for the benefit of client access to a range of services in one place, such as in Sydney where the SSI and SydWest Multicultural Services operate in the same building making it easier for new arrival families and individual communities to access the services.
- Developing closer links between national and local government in supporting the resettlement of humanitarian entrants (former refugees).
- All those included in the resettlement process should work together to streamline activities and develop a strategic and operational approach that will result in practical outcomes for resettled communities in New Zealand.

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Appendix A: Author Resettlement Journey Introduction

This is my resettlement journey summary with a focus on employment and housing experiences. It begins with my childhood memories growing up in South Sudan and becoming an Internally Displaced Person (IDP) in Sudan. It continues with my migrating abroad, seeking educational and employment opportunities, and obtaining asylum and refugee status in Syria-Damascus with the opportunity to resettle in a third country. It concludes with my finding protection and safety in an unknown destination, Aotearoa New Zealand. My story is about life before refugee status, during and after achieving refugee status.

Through the struggle and hardship, I survived. I was a victim of war and experienced serious human abuse throughout my resettlement journey. My memories are still vivid, and I am sharing them for the sake of others. They reflect the struggles and hardships common to many. I am simply painting a picture on a broader canvas in the hope that I can make a positive difference for those who are on a similar journey.

The journey to unknown destination

My journey began when I was 13 years old. When my father greeted me, and said, “good bye son until we meet again”. I didn’t know that was the last moment I would see his face. Living an orphan life is the hardest thing I have ever experienced, especially being male and the eldest in your family.

People who are accepted into humanitarian refugee programmes live lives full of secrets and disturbing pasts. Their voices are silent, their stories untold. They experience fears, insecurity and alienation. My own story is one that stresses continuing hopes and a search for an elusive resilience. I tell it to encourage others to heal themselves as they too recover from the trauma of their past. Over time they may come to rely on tomorrow being better than today.

I grew up with my family and relatives in South Sudan. The life was as beautiful and simple as you can imagine. It was a peaceful lifestyle. The environment I grew up in as a child was one where our community elders encouraged us to be brave, confident and creative in different ways to discover many things about life. In my Shilluk tradition, as a first born and a male, my family had high expectations of me as to what I could achieve in life. I grew up as the family’s favourite boy in the eyes of my relatives. My childhood didn’t last long before I was called on to take my share of family responsibility. My first duty was to babysit my second younger brother Obaj, when I was 5 years old. At the time also, I looked after the family goats, sheep and calves. My family owned over a thousand hectares of land, with cows, goats, and sheep. The community viewed my father as a ‘rich man’ and treated him with high regard. At the age of 7 years old, my duties increased looking after cows and as well as schooling. I was a country boy and at the same time a city boy experiencing both lifestyles. We owned houses in Pa-Ju village and in Malakal city. Employment was not a problem. Nor were there housing issues. Life was simple and sweet.

I grew up in Panyidway, Pa-Ju village while looking after my father’s stock and farms. Also, part of my duty was to learn how to fish and to protect livestock from the wild animals such as hyenas and lions, using traditional spears. While the cows grassed at forest and on the bank of

Sobat River, we swam. I enjoyed the forest environment where we ate fruit from the trees and fished in the Sobat River. Swimming at Sobat River and Nile River were our daily playgrounds. It was a simple life and beautiful and you cannot put a price on it. Unfortunately, my childhood wasn't completely happy compared with many other children in the world. My childhood was stolen by the South Sudanese civil war. Life turned ugly in 1983 when the second Sudanese civil war broke out between the government forces and the South Sudanese armed rebels known as the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A).

In 1984, civilians started worrying because the SPLA began to attack small towns and villages taking people's property. As a child, aged 11 years old, I experienced and witnessed indescribable images of people being killed. Here my trauma experience began. In 1985, a serious incident occurred between Nasir district and Malakal town on Sobat River. Many civilians were killed on their way to the headquarters of SPLM Bilpam, and their bodies lay on Sobat River for almost one month. At the time the people of Shilluk land on the Sobat River had been informed by Shilluk Kingdom chiefs that no one should eat fish because of the fish eating the dead bodies. It was very disturbing seeing bodies. At the time I was with my grandfather (Deng), my mother's father, at Pa-thowor village. I had escaped from my uncle (Ayok), my father's young brother, who had beaten me up, because of a mix up between the calves and their mothers as they sucked milk. My punishment was a beating and I didn't have anyone to protect me in my family. Even my mother or father had no say. So, the only way was to escape and run to my grandfather. It was not far and took me two-hours walking and running.

After some days I returned to Pa-Ju and back to school in Malakal town. The situation was going from bad to worse. The Sudanese government sent its military combat forces to Malakal to fight SPLM/A and turned all schools into military barracks. On the other side, all villages were home to SPLM/A. The Shilluk villages were made into military barracks by combat forces of the SPLM/A. There was no school, no farming, no fishing and no animal grazing. Insecurity was on the rise. The rebels were carrying out a massive recruitment of young people against their will. The warring armies committed atrocities. In this political atmosphere, my father believed that there was no future for me in Malakal. He didn't want me to be conscripted into the army of either side. He sent me to North Sudan at the age of 13. This meant vulnerability. Although I would be an Internally Displaced Person (IDP) there, life would be better in Khartoum than it would have been in Malakal.

I travelled to the North with Sudan Military forces on 13 ships (big boats). On the way, we were attacked by SPLA in Kodok near Gool village. In the ship I was in we lost some people through the exchange of gun fire between both sides. One of our neighbours in the boat was shot and her blood was all over the clothes on my back. I could not see it. At the time you could hear a gun exchange like heavy rain with lightning. That was the moment I experienced my second trauma. For one week I had no sleep seeing bodies of people killed by guns in front of me. After the tragic trip, people used to travel for three days between Malakal and Renk. It took us 29 days.

I settled in Hajj Abd Allah, I lived there for nine years as a displaced minor. I started my education there, although it was difficult to cope with the different cultures in one country.

Schools in North Sudan use Arabic as a language of instruction. There had been more English classes and less Arabic in Malakal, so, I had to learn more Arabic. Education in Sudan was more about achievement, with a high level of competition among classmates in the Sudan education system. It took me a few years to improve my Arabic language so that I could pass my classes with good grades.

Coping with a new life and new environment wasn't easy for me. My first job was in the restaurant during the weekend and school holidays. As time passed by I did many jobs including shoe repairs and cleaning, trade, shop supplier assistant, builder, teacher and general construction work. Being an Internal Displaced Person (IDP) you did anything to survive. After 2 years finding my way to the north, I received the news that my father had been killed. That was the hardest moment for me. I felt no meaning to life. While I was grieving, I reminded myself according to Shilluk culture of value as a man. I would be stepping into my father shoes to look after myself, mother and siblings. My culture gave me hope and reminded me that I couldn't change what had happened, although I could do something which my father would have been proud off. He had a son who took on his role. Based on Shilluk values I started to forgive myself and move on with hope that tomorrow would be better. I reminded myself: 'life is too short in this world, we live temporally, and our permanent place is when we die'. To live is to suffer, to survive is to find meaning in the suffering. If there is a purpose in life at all, there must be purpose in suffering and in dying. But no man can tell another what this purpose is (Frankl, 2004. P. 9).

I started reflecting on what I had learned from my father being my Kaitiaki. Therefore, I reflected on upbringing duties such as looking after my father's livestock, farms while going to school at the same time. That experience helped me to be independent and take responsibilities for life's stages. In Sudan, I worked in many jobs as mentioned above. Also, I witnessed and experienced in the war situation how our cows had been taken through rebel looting. They took every animal on their way including cows, goats, and sheep. People were beaten up and forced join the movement. Dehumanising things happened in the name of claiming South Sudan land.

As the situation in Sudan was not improving I decided to leave Sudan and migrated to Syria, after consultation with my mother. I couldn't support my university fees and at the same time support my siblings' school fees. As part of my obligation, I needed to search for answers to fulfil my responsibilities. The system in Sudan involved treating South Sudanese people badly as second-class citizens and discrimination flourished at school and in the workplace.

Arriving in Damascus, Syria, in August 2000, was a different story. It exceeded my expectations. On my arrival on the second day I found a job as a well digger for two weeks. My second job was in construction for a few months. As I got used to Syrian culture, I got a good job. I was employed as an Assistant Manager at Khalil Al Dayeh Oriental Shop in Syria. It was a big shop and I worked seven days a week, except for the three hours I used for church services on Sundays. I worked really hard to maintain myself. Through this job, I was able to pay my bills. Life improved a bit. With the little money I made, I was stepping into my father's shoes and paying my bills (power, water, phone, and rent).

In 2001, I was nearly deported back to Sudan against my will by Syrian authorities. The Sudanese government didn't want any South Sudanese to stay in Syria claiming the South Sudanese people might sabotage the government in Khartoum. The Sudanese government ordered – through its bilateral relations with Syria the deportation of all South Sudanese who lived in Syria without formal permission to stay, whether they were under the protection of the United Nations or not; that was a large number of people to deport. All the South Sudanese protested the decision and urged the United Nations to protect the refugees. We were all rounded up and crammed into Syrian military barracks, awaiting deportation. Everyone was a prisoner. I stayed in this Syrian prison for three months and 10 days, and experienced inhumane treatment. It took me five years to get refugee status under the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) local office in Damascus, Syria. The process to claim protection under the UNHCR in Syria was a long one. Patience and perseverance were the guiding principles that kept my head up.

In 2005, five months after getting refugee status, I was asked to resettle in New Zealand. I was treated as an emergency case. I felt so happy about this decision because this would also mean that I would be able to receive further education in New Zealand and find employment opportunities. With all this excitement I didn't know anything about New Zealand just that English was the first language, Maori language was a second, it was a green country with four million people and with more sheep than people. I finally had hope that this could be the beginning of a better life for me and my family. I could be moving on with my life knowing that my new home would give me protection and safety. Likewise, my responsibility was to find a way to heal my past by forgiving myself as a survivor and victim of war, with the hope and resilience that tomorrow would be better than today.

My arrival in New Zealand, touching down at Auckland Airport in 2005 was a dream come true. For my family and me our first accommodation was at Mangere Resettlement Centre, where we stayed for six weeks. During the orientation reception programme, we received a range of mix services including health screening, driver licenses, an education programme, New Zealand rules and regulations, social welfare, how to open a bank account and other social support services available. After six weeks we moved to the host community with the support of refugee services. They assisted with resettlement services including a caseworker, a cross culture worker and a local volunteer.

The reality of resettlement then kicked in. Accessing Work and Income was the first bad experience I had in New Zealand. The way they treated people meant that it wasn't a friendly environment to go and seek assistance. It was the first time in my life I had received support from the government. I was working 7 days a week when I was in Syria and in Sudan I worked hard to support myself and my family. I started reflecting on my past about the way I was treated with disrespect as an object because of my colour rather than as a resident. The primary goal of New Zealand's unemployment benefit is for the recipient to find a job as soon as possible. Employers asked for local work experience and New Zealand qualifications and this along with the pressure from WINZ had a detrimental effect.

I thought about my earlier expectations of what New Zealand could offer. The reality I experienced did not meet my expectations. How could I deal with this situation? I recalled the

words of my father that education was the key. Although, I had barely enough English for the workplace and a non-kiwi accent to boot I decided to enrol at Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT), where I studied Employment Skill English, preparation for trade, and automotive engineering (level 2,3 &4) for four years plus work experience. While I was studying at MIT, I also took courses at Te Wananga Aotearoa: computing courses National certificate (level 2,3,4) and first line management and leadership (level 4). I have also studied for a Graduate Diploma in Non-For-Profit Management and Post Graduate in Social Practice at Unitec Auckland.

The study I undertook from 2006 to 2011 had a simple aim: to deal with my lack of New Zealand qualifications and of local work experience. What I learned as a result was that networks provide an additional pathway into workplaces. It's not just what you know but whom you know. This insight was reinforced at the time as I was working with the South Sudanese community in a voluntary capacity as a leader in a different role.

My community engagement involved activities with another community network. My leadership influence took root in the South Sudanese community and expanded to the Auckland Resettled Community Coalition (ARCC) with its 20-member organisations. In my leadership capacity, I gave 8 years as a volunteer which I am proud of. I have received the New Zealander of the year Award, "Honouring the best of us", 2016 winner New Zealand Local Hero. Furthermore, I twice represented resettled communities in New Zealand at the Geneva- Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR) with Immigration New Zealand officials and now am a recipient of a Winston Churchill Scholarship. I am a proud Kiwi citizen. It is Kiwi hospitality that has helped shape this stage of my life.

Through my resettlement journey short story, I am contributing as a resource for different worldviews in terms of cultural values. My childhood upbringing was in a very rich traditional Shilluk culture combined with my Christian values. These values are the foundation which underpins my work today in helping others. As time passed on, my experiences influenced and shaped my life through education, environment, migration, and contact with many other worldviews. At this stage, I could say my journey in search for a better resettlement approach has paid off especially in the way it developed my leadership over 12 years in New Zealand and in finding my current job opportunity. Adjusting to different worldviews requires a balance identifying and using positive common factors that can contribute and accommodate these worldviews. It wasn't clear to me at the start of my journey that leadership would be my passion. Prior to stepping on to this path of leadership, I had a passion for social connection and engagement in the community. This passion for social connection and engagement, in my view, is about helping others when they need my support. Such a passion transitioned me to a leadership role starting with the South Sudanese community in New Zealand and into wider resettled community in Auckland.

Resettlement is full of life challenges and opportunities which reflect individual and backgrounds. Plus, approach, attitude, adaptation and worldview to a new home. Being positive minded you are never wrong when you do the right thing, although it is hard to keep doing everything right at all times. If your motive is driven by humanity, and real-life truths that are underpinned with culture values and life principles, toward achieving right things, you are who

you are. With the support of the people whom believe in you and by following simple life principles and cultural values that underpin your daily life practices, you will succeed.

Humanitarian migrants (former refugees) need support from individuals with courage to help heal broken hearts. Self-forgiveness, from survivor responsibilities, trauma understanding, a flexible mind enables you to manage expectations of the new country. Successful resettlement is about employment opportunities and employment is a key step to owning a house. I am a proud South Sudanese Kiwi Citizen. Kiwi hospitality brought human dignity to light. It doesn't matter the dollar value what we are doing it for humanity. My work is driven by passion, by a human right centred approach, putting my leadership in action as an advocate to achieve positive outcomes.

Appendix B: Diary of visits

In this diary of visits including participants from different backgrounds: Afghan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, South Sudan, Sudan and other ethnic migrant background who work for NGOs and government departments.				
Date	Name & Title	Organisation/ individual	Address	Description of service and programmes
20 Mar 17	Ramesh Kumar GM Social Participation and International Humanitarian Affairs	AMES Australia, Melbourne	Level 4, Ramesh's Office, Little Collins Street, Melbourne	Provide English language and Settlement services in Victoria, in addition to be a major supplier of specialist employment and training services in Melbourne and Sydney.
23 Mar 17	Hameed Nida: Orientation Coordinator	AMES Australia, Melbourne	Level 5, 255 Williams Street, Flagstaff office, Melbourne	
24 Mar 17	Krystle Nedinis: Regional Client Relationship Manager	AMES Australia, Melbourne	Ground floor, 289 Barkley Street Footscray	
25 Mar 17	Dr Melika Yassin: Manager, International and Community Development	AMES Australia, Melbourne	Level 5, 255 Williams Street, Flagstaff office, Melbourne	
25 Mar 17	1. James Wastino Karial, 2. Ashwill Ayuk and 3. Banydhuro Samson Oyay: Community Leaders and cultural advisers	South Sudanese Community leaders	16 Dinnell St, Sunshine West VC 3020, Melbourne	
26 Mar 17	Observation tour at Footscray multicultural market	Public space	Footscray multicultural market	Public general observation
29 Mar 17	Adeline Kim: Multicultural Affairs and Social Cohesion Division	Department of Premier and Cabin	3/3 Treasury Place, Melbourne, Victoria 3001	The Multicultural Affairs and Social Cohesion (MASC) division provides policy and program support to drive the Victorian Government's multicultural vision and priorities.
30 Mar 17	1. Zakaria Girish 2. And Manasseh Moses Riek: Community Leaders and cultural advisers	Australian- new comer community Leaders	16 Dinnell St, Sunshine West VC 3020, Melbourne	They role to support and connect new arrival humanitarian entrants to Australia service providers and host society

30 Mar 17	Andrew Kok: Director	Cush family day care	Suite 15, 7-9 Leeds St, Footscray, Vic 3011	Support communities and families with: full time and part time care after and before school care, weekend care, casual care, emergency care and vacation care.
5 Apr 17	Observation tour at Blacktown multicultural market	Public space	Blacktown NSW 2148, Australia	Public general observation
6 Apr 17	Shanan Hassan: Employment Officer	Settlement Services International (SSI)	Level 2/125 Main St, Blacktown NSW 2148, Australia	A primary provider of resettlement and case management services to refugees and humanitarian entrants, and case management for people seeking asylum.
11 Ari 17	Otak James Chway: Community Leader	Australian- new comer community Leader	1 De lacy place in Chisholm 2905, Canberra	Sharing his experience on services he received when he arrived in Australia and post resettlement.
12 Apr 17	1. Emmanuel Kendok 2. Two leaders 3. Three Youth: South Sudanese Community Leader, NSW	South Sudanese Community In NSW	Building 41, Punt Road Gladesville NSW 2111 Australia	Community leaders and three youth representatives (group discussion) with two community leaders and three youth leaders
13 Apr 17	Abulla Agwa: Team Leader	SydWest Multicultural Services	Level 2/125 Main St, Blacktown NSW 2148, Australia	They provide and connect people from all ages and cultures to direct services that meet their individual, family, and social needs so that they can become self-sufficient, capable and valuable members of Australia society.
13 Apr 17	Sarjoh Bah: Multicultural Services Officer	Australian Government Department of Human Resource	8 First Ave, Blacktown NSW 2148, Australia	They deliver social and health payments and services

Appendix C: Questionnaire, Concern Form and Participant Information Sheet

Interview questions:

1. What roles do organisations (e.g., government agency, non-government organisation, and community organisations) play dealing with employment and housing issues in the refugee resettlement?
2. In your opinion, what are important factors in achieving better resettlement outcomes in employment and housing?

Project Title: Benchmarking the Resettlement Process of New Zealand against Melbourne and Sydney, Australia.

This research project will investigate:

1. the role of the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), government agencies, private sector (business) and community groups in the resettlement process and how they deal with employment and housing opportunities.
2. how the newcomers' refugee orientation programme has been carried out, including transition to resettling in the host community when it comes to housing and employment.
3. how to produce clear outcomes and benefits for resettlement sector, New Zealand society and the understanding of resettlement processes in both countries

The primary aim:

is to benchmark the refugee resettlement programme in New Zealand against that of

Melbourne and Sydney, Australia. My main area of investigation would be the role of the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and government agencies in the resettlement process and how they deal with employment and housing opportunities.

I am seeking participants willing to be interviewed individually, or as part of a group, at a time and venue to be agreed

Thank you for taking the time to consider this participant information sheet (PIS).

PIS Requisite Stipulations for Participants:

Venue: the venue for interviews will be selected according to availability and one that is acceptable to the participant(s).

Duration: Interviews / discussions will be no shorter than 30 mins and no longer than half a day in full duration. Participants may leave at any stage.

Data Use: Relevant data collected will be drawn on for articulating this research in appropriate publications, conference presentations, lectures and report for the Winston

Churchill Memorial Trust Board. Information of a personal nature may be collected and participants may choose to be identified or not.

Data Storage/Disposal

All electronic recordings and data will be stored by Abann Yor, on a private hard-drive and kept separate from the correlating consent forms. Abann Yor agrees to store these electronic copies for a period of three years, after which time they will be disposed of appropriately.

Results made Public

Results will be made available through the public arena (as stipulated above). The use of data contributed by a participant will be duly acknowledged appropriately and as per their choice (either by formal name or pseudonym) as specified on the Consent and Confidentiality form.

Participants Right of Questioning

At any time throughout the interview / discussion process

participants may ask the interviewer relevant questions that are to be answered at the time.

Right to Withdrawal

Participants may withdraw from this research at any time.

Benchmarking the Resettlement Process of New Zealand against Melbourne and Sydney, Australia.

Participant Consent and Confidentiality Form

In signing this consent form, I have read and understood the following provisions:

- a) I have received the **Participant Information Sheet** for this study and have had relevant details explained to me. My questions regarding this research have also been addressed and answered to my satisfaction.
- b) I understand that I may ask further questions at any time throughout the process and that I may refrain from answering any specific questions.
- c) I understand that I am free to withdraw from this research at any time.
- d) I agree to provide information to the researcher under the conditions of confidentiality stipulated in the Participant Information Sheet.

Please cross out the option which **DOES NOT** apply:

- 1. I **consent** / **do not consent** to being identified as a contributing participant.
- 2. I request that a copy of my summary notes, and any images obtained, be: **sent to me** / **not required**

- 1. I **consent** / **do not consent** to copies of the summary notes and images being stored securely by Abann Yor and all original materials and data will be retained by him.
- 2. I **consent to my name being used** / **would prefer to remain anonymous and have a pseudonym used**, in all documents which arise from this research.

Participant's Full Name:

Email address:

pant's postal address:

Participant's Signature:

Date signed:

I thank you for taking the time to complete this consent form.

Results made Public: Results will be made available to participants through the general public arena (as noted in PIS). Use of data contributed by a participant will be duly acknowledged appropriately and as per their choice (either by formal name or pseudonym) as specified on the Consent and Confidentiality form.

If you have any queries regarding this research, please contact Abann Yor directly.

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