

IAN AXFORD
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FELLOWSHIPS
in
PUBLIC POLICY

Does a Rising Tide Lift All Boats? Refugee Resettlement, Integration and New Zealand's Settlement Strategy

Prepared by
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Ian Axford (New Zealand) Fellowships in Public Policy

Ian Axford (New Zealand) Fellowships in Public Policy were named in honour of Sir Ian Axford, an eminent New Zealand astrophysicist and space scientist who is patron of the fellowship programme.

Since his education in New Zealand and England, Sir Ian has held Professorships at Cornell University and the University of California, and was Vice-Chancellor of Victoria University of Wellington for three years. For many years, Sir Ian was director of the Max Planck Institute for Aeronomy in Germany, where he was involved in the planning of several space missions, including those of the Voyager planetary explorers, the Giotto space probe and the Ulysses galaxy explorer.

Sir Ian is recognised as one of the great thinkers and communicators in the world of space science, and is a highly respected and influential administrator. A recipient of numerous science awards, he was knighted and named New Zealander of the Year in 1995.

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Patti Grogan
Wellington, July 2008

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

According to the United Nations, refugees are individuals who are living outside their country of nationality and are “unable or unwilling to return to that country due to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that there are nearly ten million refugees worldwide. Most refugees eventually return home or are absorbed into the country of asylum, but a small number are resettled into countries willing to accept them, including both the United States and New Zealand.

In the US and NZ resettlement is a responsibility shared among various levels of government, community-based organisations, volunteers and refugees themselves. Both countries confront similar challenges in assisting refugees to become economically self-sufficient: a large percentage of newly-arrived refugees have very limited English skills and quite limited education.

Since passing the Social Security Act in 1938, New Zealand has established as a cultural norm an individual's right to a reasonable standard of living. New Zealand remains a strong example of the welfare state, providing an array of social services for the aged, for caregivers, for the unemployed and for the disabled. Services to refugees are largely provided within the mainstream system, with the exception of an initial six-week orientation at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre.

The United States, by contrast, assumes a less far-reaching government responsibility for individuals. A sense of individual responsibility and individual reward, combined with a resentment of government confiscation of personal property through taxes, is integral to the US character. Refugees can receive limited welfare benefits, but the focus of the US resettlement programme is to assist refugees to become self-sufficient as quickly as possible. Refugees are generally served through specialised programmes focused on acquiring English language skills and placement in employment.

Refugee resettlement efforts in both countries are facing change as governments create policies in reaction to increased global migration. Nearly two hundred million migrants, three percent of the global population, now live outside their country of birth. Migrants change both the communities they move to and the ones they leave. Governments are becoming interested in the impact of global migration, not just on economics and employment, but also on health care, language acquisition, citizenship and social cohesion.

Some governments seek to enforce cultural uniformity in response to the arrival of large numbers of migrants with languages, religions and cultures different from the majority population. Others countries have been experiencing unrest in immigrant communities due to perceptions that their needs are not adequately addressed by the host government. Other governments seek to take active steps to ease migrant settlement or ensure adequate labour pools. Increasingly, governments are seeking to address these issues through strategic integration programmes that recognise the need for adaptation of both the host community and new arrivals.

Among those affected by integration efforts, refugees require special attention. Government resources aimed at supporting language learning and appropriate employment of the foreign-born can provide significant benefit to refugees. Government attention to the responsiveness of mainstream services to immigrants is also important. Refugees benefit from regulations assuring equal rights for immigrants and mechanisms to enforce prohibitions against discrimination based on national origin or language capabilities. Perhaps most important, the acknowledgement of immigrants as important and necessary contributors to society can help shape public opinion to value all immigrants, including refugees.

Integration policies also pose some risks to refugees. Integration programmes that require attainment of benchmarks within set time frames, place punitive measure on the failure to achieve those benchmarks, or withhold services or benefits (including citizenship benefits) can most harshly affect refugees with limited education, fewer language skills, those who are elderly and the most traumatised.

New Zealand has developed a national Settlement Strategy, and the associated Settlement National Action Plan, that sets forth a collaborative framework to assist both new arrivals and local communities to improve settlement outcomes. The Settlement Strategy was designed to assist New Zealand to remain internationally competitive and enhance social development through a coordinated approach to migrant integration. A key component of the Settlement Strategy was the development of information and referral services for refugees and migrants, implemented as Settlement Support New Zealand.

The implementation of the Settlement Support New Zealand (SSNZ) initiatives in local communities presents a unique opportunity to analyse a new integration programme seeking to serve refugees as well as the greater migrant community. The goal of this research was to examine refugee resettlement in New Zealand and the effect of the initiative on refugees. Three elements of the evolving Settlement Support programme were reviewed. First, the research analysed the degree to which local settlement support organisations incorporated the refugee-serving agencies and the specific needs of refugees into the local strategy. Second, the research looked at whether or not the services provided were accessible to refugees, given their diverse linguistic needs. Third, client data was analysed to determine if refugees were utilising services available through the SSNZ networks and if their use differed identifiably from that of other immigrant groups.

Results of this analysis show that local SSNZ initiatives encounter a variety of issues affecting migrants and refugees. Coordinators undertake problem-solving for specific populations, which can include issues that primarily affect refugees.

Access to support is a concern. Refugees who cannot communicate in English may find it difficult to access assistance through SSNZ offices. Few SSNZ initiatives have conducted an analysis of the language needs of refugee populations. A limited amount of written material is available in refugee languages, and workshops and orientations seldom offer interpreters. Government documents translated into multiple languages often reflect the largest language populations, such as Chinese, Samoan, and Korean. Only rarely are resources available in languages relevant to refugees, such as Arabic and Somali.

Perhaps the most significant measure of the impact of the SSNZ programme on refugees is use of the services offered. In total, quota refugees amounted to approximately 10 percent of all users of SSNZ services. When family reunification and asylum seekers are included, humanitarian categories constitute more than 15 percent of total SSNZ clients. Utilisation rates by refugees varied significantly between communities, and 95 percent of all quota refugee contacts with SSNZ occurred in only four communities. It is notable that refugee uptake is highest in communities in which the SSNZ office is co-located with other agencies serving refugees. It is recommended that local activities be focused to ensure priority services are accessible to all migrants, programmes are more closely aligned with client needs, and a transition process is developed for refugees.

New Zealand's experience with the Settlement Support programme can provide direction for other governments seeking to implement integration programmes and to support refugees. The following important lessons can be learned from the New Zealand experience:

- Government leadership can support successful integration.
- Integration is more than language acquisition.
- The identification of gaps in services will raise issues of government's response.
- The priorities and limits of integration programmes need to be defined.
- Interpretation and translation need to be addressed comprehensively.
- The effect of integration programmes on existing networks needs to be managed.
- Integration programmes should be voluntary.

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INTRODUCTION

Global migration has become a fact of life. Both New Zealand and the United States have significant and laudable histories of welcoming newcomers but are struggling with new challenges to manage diversity, address language needs, foster social cohesion and understand and convey what it means to be a citizen.

Government interventions for immigrants can play a supportive and welcoming role but can also create new challenges. Of special concern is one group of immigrants who migrate not because they choose to live away from their homeland, but because they are forced to leave. Refugees, asylees and other humanitarian immigrants resettle in new countries because they are in need of protection, but are often affected by policies designed to address the needs of economic or voluntary migrants.

New Zealand's progress in settlement and integration policy is of particular interest because it is one of a small number of countries that resettle refugees and has begun to implement national integration policies. While the Settlement National Action Plan (SNAP) is still in its early stages, the process of its implementation provides some understanding of how these policies affect refugees.

This report does not attempt to analyse the entirety of New Zealand's Settlement Strategy, which includes seven broad goals and 23 on-going government initiatives, each of which merit in-depth research and evaluation. This research takes a comparative look at refugee resettlement in the US and New Zealand within the context of each nation's social structure and differing understanding of the role of government. From this perspective, the research examines how refugees are served through the newest migrant integration initiative, Settlement Support New Zealand (SSNZ). This programme is designed to support a key goal of the Settlement Strategy: to ensure that migrants, refugees and their families access the information and services they require to participate productively and independently in society.

Chapter 1 provides background information on refugees, international resettlement programmes and the refugee selection/admissions process in both countries. Chapter 2 offers analysis of those processes. Chapter 3 examines resettlement from the point of arrival in the two countries, including social welfare policy and programmes designed to assist refugees to learn English and obtain employment. Chapter 4 looks at some implications of the resettlement practices. Chapter 5 analyses the implementation of the Settlement Support New Zealand (SSNZ) programme and its interaction with refugees. Chapter 6 identifies some considerations for the development of integration policies that support refugees based on the experiences of New Zealand's refugee resettlement and Settlement Support programmes.

1 REFUGEE ADMISSIONS IN NEW ZEALAND AND THE UNITED STATES

Who are refugees?

In popular usage, the word “refugee” describes a range of people from economic migrants to hurricane evacuees, but under international law its meaning is very specific. The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees¹ and its Protocols², defines a “refugee” as an individual who is living outside their country of nationality and is “unable or unwilling to return to that country due to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.” Countries who sign the convention, including both the United States and New Zealand, agree to provide protection to individuals fleeing persecution.

The concept of refugees as a separate population deserving of international attention and protection was originally developed with reference to Europeans displaced during World War II³. The same premise has been applied over the years to groups as diverse as the Vietnamese who left South Vietnam after the fall of Saigon, Hungarians who escaped after the uprising against communism, Bosnians who fled the Balkans and Rwandan genocide survivors.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates the current worldwide refugee population to be 9.9 million, with significant populations originating from countries including Afghanistan, Iraq, Sudan, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi.⁴

Determination of refugees differs between nations, as signatories of the Convention establish their own processes to determine status within their own legal structure. Once refugee status has been granted, signatory nations agree to protect refugees by allowing them residence and basic rights, including access to employment and education, to the same degree as nationals.

The test for consideration as a refugee under international agreements includes several elements. First, applicants must be living outside their country of nationality. Individuals who have been persecuted but have not crossed a border into another country are considered “internally displaced persons”.⁵ Internally displaced persons may well be persecuted to the same degree and for the same reasons as refugees, but remain subject to the laws of their country.

Nations may choose to offer refugee status to individuals who do not meet this criterion. In certain circumstances, the United States will consider for refugee status

¹ United Nations (1951)

² United Nations (1967)

³ United Nations (1951)

⁴ Diallo, Khassoum (December 2007), p.26

⁵ *Internally Displaced People Questions and Answers* (2007)

individuals who are still living within their home country boundaries, including applicants from the former Soviet Union, Cuba and Vietnam.⁶

The second test requires that the individual must be unable or unwilling to return to their home country due to a “well-founded fear of persecution.” Again, signatories have developed processes for determining the meaning of this phrase. Persecution generally requires a degree of harm that is inflicted by the state, or by individuals or groups that the state cannot or will not control. The convention does not require that persecution to have already occurred. The Third Colloquium on Challenges in International Refugee Law suggested this international standard:

The determination of whether an applicant’s “fear” – in the sense of forward-looking expectation of risk – is, or is not, “well-founded” is thus purely evidentiary in nature. It requires the state party assessing refugee status to determine whether there is a significant risk that the applicant may be persecuted. While the mere chance or remote possibility of being persecuted is insufficient to establish a well-founded fear, the applicant need not show that there is a clear probability that he or she will be persecuted.⁷

The final test for refugee status is the relationship between the persecution and race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion of the individual applicant. The application of these concepts varies between countries. Many countries have seen these concepts evolve. Courts⁸ have found that a Chinese family with children born in violation of the one-child policy faced persecution based on membership of a social group. A US decision was made in favour of a woman who feared female genital mutilation, and she was also considered for refugee status as a member of a social group.⁹ In Canada, a Serbian who refused to serve in a military action that was condemned by the international community as contrary to the basic rules of human conduct was given status under protections for political opinion.¹⁰

Resettlement and Other Durable Solutions

Few of the nearly 10 million refugees of concern to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) will ever be resettled to the United States, New Zealand or any other resettlement nation. In 2006, only one percent of refugees benefited from resettlement.¹¹ Recognising the limited availability of resettlement options, the UNHCR and participating governments generally seek other long-term solutions, except for those refugees who need protection that is unavailable in the country of first asylum. Voluntary repatriation to the home country is the preferred option if conditions in that country have changed sufficiently to afford protection to the refugees. If repatriation is not possible, some refugees seek integration into the

⁶ The US Immigration and Nationality Act (Section 101 (A) (42)) allows persecuted individuals who have not fled their home country to seek refugee status in certain circumstances.

⁷ *The Michigan Guidelines on Well-Founded Fear: Third Colloquium on Challenges in International Refugee Law Convened by the Program in Refugee and Asylum Law* (2004)

⁸ *Chan Lan Liu v. Secretary of State for the Home Department*

⁹ *Matter of Kasinga* (1996)

¹⁰ *Ciric v. Canada* (2008)

¹¹ Diallo, Khassoum (2007), p.37

country of first asylum. In some instances, refugees are re-victimised in the country in which they sought asylum, or the presence of refugees presents a destabilising force or insurmountable burden to the country to which they have fled. In these situations, refugees are sometimes considered for resettlement.

In 2006 14 nations resettled refugees, including Australia (13,400), Canada (10,700), Sweden (2,400) and Norway (1,000). In the same year, the United States resettled 41,277 refugees, while New Zealand accepted 688,¹² both fewer than their ceilings of 70,000 and 750 respectively.

The UNHCR has developed several different methodologies for analysing the capacity for nations to host refugees, considering factors including size, Gross Domestic Product measures and population of different nations.¹³ The first of these methods compares the refugee population to the Gross Domestic Product Purchasing Power Parity as a relative measure of impact of the contribution the country makes protecting refugees. Under this analysis, the contribution ratio to refugee protection of the US and New Zealand is 11.9 and 0.2 respectively, with the higher number indicating the country is absorbing a greater burden. When resettlement numbers are compared to population of the host countries, the numbers are closer. The refugee population between 2002 and 2006 per 1,000 inhabitants shows a ratio of 1.7 for the US and 1.3 for New Zealand.

The US and New Zealand receive refugees from some of the same source countries. During the NZ financial years 2002-2003 to 2006-2007, refugees arrived to New Zealand from the following countries,¹⁴ as well as smaller numbers from a variety of nations:

Afghanistan	1119	30%
Iraq	634	17%
Myanmar	442	12%
Iran	237	6%
Sudan	230	6%
Somalia	204	5%
Burundi	185	5%
Ethiopia	147	4%

During the US Federal Fiscal Years 2002-2003 through 2005-2006, refugees arrived to the United States from the following countries,¹⁵ as well as smaller numbers from a variety of nations:

Somalia	36,085	20%
Liberia	16,788	10%
Laos	15,365	9%
Russia	14,935	8%
Ukraine	13,919	8%
Cuba	12,758	7%

¹² *Statistics by Nationality and Location 2006-2007* (2007)

¹³ Diallo, Khassoum (2007), pp.77-78

¹⁴ *Statistics by Nationality and Location 2006-2007* (2007)

¹⁵ *Summary of Refugee Admissions* (n.d.)

Iran	8,906	5%
Vietnam	7,726	4%
Ethiopia	7,350	4%

It is important to note that while the US and New Zealand are leaders in the resettlement of refugees, other nations absorb a great burden of refugees by virtue of geography. In 2006 Armenia, for example, was home to 71 refugees per thousand inhabitants and Djibouti was home to 36 per thousand. Other countries were far more affected comparative to the Gross Domestic Product Purchasing Power Parity (GDP PPP) per capita; such as Tanzania at 738, Pakistan at 420 and the Congo at 280.¹⁶

Asylum Seekers

In addition to refugees who are resettled, many countries also admit immigrants on humanitarian grounds. Those who have been persecuted in their home country and flee, often across many borders, are most similar to resettled refugees. Some arrive in countries like the US and New Zealand then seek admission. In the US individuals who can demonstrate persecution under the same standards as apply to refugees may be granted asylum. In New Zealand, the law allows asylum seekers to apply for admission as refugees under the category of Convention Refugees.

The US grants asylum to approximately 25,000 individuals each year, primarily from China, Haiti, Colombia and Venezuela, with small numbers from other countries. There are two paths for obtaining asylum in the US. An individual physically present in the US, whether or not they have lawful visa status, may file an affirmative claim for asylum with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service. The affirmative claim is designed to be a non-adversarial process and is adjudicated based on the ability of the claimants to demonstrate that they meet the same criteria as a refugee. In addition, individuals threatened with removal from the United States who face persecution can file a defensive asylum petition. The Executive Office of Immigration Review adjudicates defensive petitions in an adversarial proceeding.¹⁷

In New Zealand the Refugee Status Branch adjudicates individual claims. Primary countries of origin for asylum seekers in recent years include Iran, India, Thailand, China, Zimbabwe, Iraq, Sri Lanka, and Hungary. Appeals can be brought to the Refugee Status Appeals Authority.¹⁸

According to UNHCR, in 2006 the United States received 51,510 asylum applications of a worldwide total of 303,430.¹⁹ Applications showed a continuing decline over previous years and less than half as many applications were filed compared to 2002, when the US received 100,270 applicants of a worldwide total of 628,660.

Asylum applications often take considerable time to adjudicate, so there is not a direct relationship between filings that occur in one year and determinations of status. In the Federal Fiscal Year 2006, the United States approved 26,116 asylum claims, more

¹⁶ Diallo, Khassoum (2007), p.77

¹⁷ *Obtaining Asylum in the United States: Two Paths* (n.d.)

¹⁸ Refugee Status Appeals Authority (n.d.)

¹⁹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (March 2007), p.10

than the FFY2005 total of 25,160.²⁰ Annual data is not readily available, but a Congressional Research Report showed asylum office approval rate at 32 percent in 2004 and an Executive Office of Immigration Review rate of 34%.²¹ Applications in New Zealand showed similar patterns. In 2007 there were 280 applicants compared to nearly four times that in 2002.²² New Zealand approved 68 claims in 2005-2006, representing an approval rate of 20 percent of claims determined during that time.²³

Other Humanitarian Admissions

Both the United States and New Zealand allow humanitarian admissions outside the refugee and asylum processes. The US includes “humanitarian parole” and “public interest parole” for individuals who are not otherwise admissible but have an urgent need to enter the country. Parole is generally a temporary, non-immigrant status, but other provisions of immigration law allow certain individuals to adjust their parole status to permanent residence and, ultimately, citizenship. Other humanitarian programmes include avenues for temporary or permanent admission for victims of human trafficking, victims of domestic violence or violence against women, victims of crime, and temporary protected status for individuals from a country deemed unsafe due to an armed conflict or environmental disaster or other extraordinary event.²⁴ Congress has responded to specific humanitarian concerns with legislation targeting specific groups, such as Nicaraguans, Guatemalans, Hondurans, Haitians, Chinese students, and victims of torture. Most recently, Congress has included special immigration programmes for Iraqis and Afghans for humanitarian reasons.

Humanitarian admissions in the US have largely been responsive to specific, well-defined populations. Support for particular groups has generally increased total admissions rather than forcing a choice between groups within a total admissions cap. Domestic politics, often involving ethnic and religious interest groups, has played a significant role in the development of a humanitarian admissions policy.

New Zealand allocates 10 percent of its total newcomer admissions to the international/humanitarian category. Refugees and asylum seekers (also known as “convention refugees”) as well as refugee family reunification immigrants fall into this category. In addition, the international/humanitarian quota includes categories of non-refugee immigrants as New Zealand seeks to meet its international responsibilities to the region, including a Samoan Quota and the Pacific Access Category. The refugee quota of 750, and the Refugee Family Support Category of 300 amount to about a quarter of the international/humanitarian admissions. This is less than three percent of all residence approvals.²⁵

In the US permanent residence may be granted to refugees and asylees one year after entry. Adjustment to permanent residence is neither required nor automatic for refugees or asylees, but it does require approval of an application. Approvals in any given year may include applicants who entered the US the year before or many years

²⁰ Jeffreys, Kelly (2007a), p.4

²¹ Congressional Research Report (2006)

²² United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (March 2007), p.10

²³ *The RAM Report, Refugee Analysis Monthly* (2007)

²⁴ *Humanitarian Benefits* (2008)

²⁵ *Migration Trends 2005/06* (2006), p.100

before the application was filed, so the statistics are not comparable to New Zealand. In 2007 refugees and asylees were 12.9 percent of the total permanent residences approved.²⁶

Admissions Policy for Refugees

In both the United States and New Zealand resettlement is a responsibility shared among various levels of government, community-based organisations, volunteers and refugees themselves. Some processes, such as admissions, are managed only by the central or national government; other aspects, such as civic engagement and ethnic community development, have largely devolved to local communities.

In both countries, the refugee resettlement process begins with the determination of the number of refugees to be admitted. The number and country of origin of refugees to admit can be a complex; balancing international responsibilities, humanitarian and international security concerns, and public opinion related to the real and perceived capacity of newcomers to fully integrate into the receiving society.

US – Ceilings and Regional Allocations

In the US the refugee admissions process is a federal government function initiated by an annual Presidential Determination at the start of the federal fiscal year. The Determination is issued only after consultations with the Congress on recommendations compiled in an interagency Report to the Congress. The Department of State is the lead agency in developing this document, which both sets a ceiling on refugee admissions and allocates admissions among designated world regions. Non-governmental actors, including community-based organisations, may comment before and during the consultation with the Congress.

The ceiling on admissions for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2008 was set at 80,000, allocated to refugees of special humanitarian concern in the following regions.²⁷

Africa	16,000
East Asia	20,000
Europe and Central Asia	3,000
Latin America and Caribbean	3,000
Near East/South East Asia	28,000
Unallocated Reserve	10,000

The United States accepts all categories of refugees referred by the UNHCR, including Unaccompanied Refugee Minors, Women at Risk, Medical and Disabled refugees. The State Department then establishes priorities for processing refugee groups within the established ceilings. Priority one cases, known as P-1, include those referred by the UNHCR, a US embassy or non-governmental agencies. This group is generally in urgent need of resettlement due to security concerns, danger of refoulement²⁸, and other compelling needs.

²⁶Jeffreys, Kelly (2008), p.2. 136,125 of 1,052,415 were refugees or asylees.

²⁷ *Presidential Determination No. 2008-1: FFY08 Refugee Admissions Numbers* (2007)

²⁸ “Refoulement”, or the expulsion or return of a refugee to territories where his life or freedom is threatened, is prohibited under Article 33 of the 1951 Convention Related to the Status of Refugees.

Priority two (P-2) is reserved for groups of special concern. Criteria are defined annually based on changing world situations. In FFY 2008 priority two groups included Sudanese Darfurians in Iraq, Bhutanese in Nepal, Iranian religious minorities and Burmese ethnic minorities in Thailand and Malaysia.²⁹

Priority three (P-3) is limited to family members of individuals already admitted to the United States as refugees or asylees. Qualifying relationships are limited to spouses, unmarried minor children and parents. In FFY 2008 nationals of the following countries were eligible for priority three resettlement: Afghanistan, Burma, Burundi, Colombia, Congo (Brazzaville), Congo (DROC), Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Iraq, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, and Uzbekistan.³⁰

The State Department oversees initial admissions processing, including screening applicants referred by the UNHCR, US embassies and others. These activities are performed by ten Overseas Processing Entities (OPEs) in Accra, Bangkok, Cairo, Havana, Ho Chi Minh City, Istanbul, Kathmandu, Moscow, Nairobi, and Vienna. OPEs record biographical information, education and employment history, and prepare application forms.

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) then interviews individual applicants and approves or rejects the refugee's claim. The USCIS makes the ultimate decision to approve applicants for refugee status only after medical screening and security checks. Sponsorship by one of the ten domestic resettlement agencies is required to complete the application.

An initial cultural orientation is usually provided in the country of processing for refugees before they come to the US, although in countries with in-country processing some level of orientation may be provided in the home country. Cultural orientation may be as limited as two hours or may last days, depending on the circumstances under which the training is provided. The training generally incorporates:³¹

- processing, travel and travel loans;
- role of the resettlement agency;
- housing;
- employment;
- health;
- education;
- money management;
- transportation;
- cultural adjustment; and
- rights and responsibilities in the United States.

Refugees receive interest-free loans to pay for transportation to the United States, but are required to repay the loans within specified time frames.

²⁹ *Presidential Determination No. 2008-1: FFY08 Refugee Admissions Numbers* (2007)

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Center for Applied Linguistics (n.d.)

Family reunification is an important component of refugee resettlement and can be accomplished through several different scenarios. One option is the P-3 category. These cases are limited to the listed countries, applicants must be outside their country of origin, and an eligible anchor refugee must file an Affidavit of Relationship. Refugees may only serve as the anchor for spouses, unmarried children under 21 years of age, or parents. Resettlement agencies are the sponsor of record for the P-3 category and Visa 93 option described below, rather than the anchor refugee.

A second option for families of refugees is known as “following to join” or Visa 93. Refugees who have been admitted to the US may petition, within two years of admission, on behalf of a spouse or unmarried children under the age of 21, but not for parents. Applicants for admission to the United States through this process are not required to prove persecution and are not required to be outside their country of origin. Visa 93 applicants are counted against refugee arrival ceilings and beneficiaries of these petitions are eligible for refugee benefits once in the United States. A similar programme, Visa 92, is available for spouses and dependent children of asylees, but neither the asylees nor family members count against the refugee ceiling.

Finally, family members of refugees may be admitted through regular immigration channels aimed at family reunification. Sponsorship of relatives requires status as a lawful permanent resident or citizen, and offers preferences to citizens. Refugees can apply for permanent resident status one year after arrival and are eligible for citizenship after five years, and are subject to waiting periods for eligibility to sponsor relatives under regular immigration categories. Some waiting periods for family applicants are quite lengthy and the financial requirements for support may be difficult for some refugees to meet.

New Zealand – Quota Composition Plan

In New Zealand a quota is approved annually by the Minister of Immigration and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade. In recent years the quota has been set at 750 refugees, including specific subcategories, such as Women at Risk and Medical/Disabled.

Immigration New Zealand is part of the Department of Labour. The Refugee Division develops a Quota Composition Plan that sets forth the regional and global priorities for New Zealand admissions each year. The 2007/2008 quota set four key priorities:³²

- responding to global priority protection pressures;
- facilitating family reunification for refugees already in New Zealand;
- resettling emergency protection cases from countries of asylum; and
- focusing on refugee caseloads where New Zealand’s contribution can make the biggest difference.

The nationalities that comprise the New Zealand quota for the 2007/2008 financial year include:

³² *Refugee Quota Composition* (n.d.)

Myanmarese (mainly Chin)	200
Bhutanese in Nepal	100
Eritreans in Sudan	100
Afghans	100
Iraqis	75
Colombians	25
Family reunion	115
Emergency Referrals	35

New Zealand only considers refugees referred for resettlement by the UNHCR, and those referrals may be declined. The Refugee Quota staff conduct selection missions to interview refugees. NZ pays the cost of travel for resettled refugees who are selected for admission.

Families of refugees may be admitted through several processes. Spouses and dependents may be accepted under the Refugee Quota Programme without a UN referral as a discretionary action. Family members that were not declared at the first interview with the Quota Branch are usually not admitted.

Some refugee family members may also be admitted through the Refugee Family Support Category. This category is limited to 300 individuals per year, and is designed to provide support to the refugee who has already been admitted to New Zealand. Preference is given to those refugees who have no immediate family in New Zealand or who are sole carers of dependent relatives.

Refugees may also sponsor partners, parents, children or siblings through normal immigration policy if relevant criteria are met, including sponsorship requirements. As in the United States, these criteria are often difficult for newly arrived refugees to meet.

The Refugee Division of the Department of Labour develops and distributes background and cultural materials on arriving refugee groups to partner agencies at each intake.

2 ANALYSIS OF REFUGEE ADMISSIONS

Integration Potential as a Criterion for Admission

Pressure is increasing worldwide to consider potential integration outcomes as a criterion for selection of refugee populations. Canada considers the potential of a refugee applicant to become self-sufficient. The Netherlands rejects referrals from the UNHCR that are perceived to be unable to “fit in” to Dutch society.³³ Denmark requires refugees to sign a document indicating that they understand the importance of obtaining work and learning to speak Danish.

While these countries allow waivers to the integration requirements for cases in urgent need of protection, the use of criteria unrelated to the situation of the individual refugees endangers the option of resettlement. Only a very small number of countries participate in refugee resettlement. They are generally first world, industrialised countries with fairly similar workforce requirements and education levels. Refugee populations, unfortunately, rarely match the education and employment qualifications preferred by these nations. Simply put, there are more unskilled workers than highly skilled professionals in refugee camps.

Attempting to evaluate the integration potential of refugee applicants is problematic. There are no objective standards to evaluate refugee attributes, which often include perseverance, entrepreneurship and survival skills. Assessments rely on a limited review of the two items that refugees often cannot document and may have been prevented from participating in: employment and education.

Another significant concern about assessing refugees’ potential for integration is the nature of the comparison. Assessing refugees against the norms of the receiving society, in a similar manner as an applicant under an employment-based immigration scheme, does not take into account a refugee's lack of choice. The alternative to resettlement is for the applicant to remain in place. For refugees referred by the UNHCR, remaining in place has already been determined to be unsafe or unsustainable. A more appropriate assessment criterion is whether or not the refugee will be better protected in the country to which they have been referred than in the refugee situation.

Neither the United States nor New Zealand currently assesses integration potential although use settlement outcomes to guide selection processes has been suggested as an option in New Zealand.

Family Reunification

Perhaps the single most important issue for refugees in New Zealand is family reunification. The requirement of a UNHCR referral to be considered for admission as a refugee, combined with the small number in each group quota, creates a large obstacle to resettling extended family groups. As a result most refugees to New Zealand are separated from family members, many of whom remain in the same

³³ Gray, Alison (2007), p.58

situation from which the refugees fled. The concern for family members still at risk is an abiding issue for most refugees in New Zealand.

Countries engaged in refugee resettlement must weigh the needs of refugees with their own national interests. Clearly, each nation has significant interest in controlling immigration numbers and ensuring that new arrivals will make a positive contribution to the country. Further, it must be acknowledged that whatever limits are established to reunifying families will be seen as harsh for individuals trying to rescue family members from persecution. If an individual is allowed to bring dependent children, they will seek to bring adult children; if they are allowed to bring parents they will seek to bring siblings. The very basic desire of humans to care for family will inevitably clash with government policy to control admissions.

These patterns notwithstanding, it appears that New Zealand's current policy creates hardship for refugees and additional pressure on government for solutions. Family reunification is a primary topic at refugee consultations and a key concern of most refugees. Some of the options for addressing the issue, such as increasing the number of humanitarian admissions to allow for more family reunification, may be considered to be politically unacceptable.

Another possible approach would be to retain the same level of admissions each year but to reduce the number of populations and expand the number of family groups within the selected populations. In 2007/2008, for example, New Zealand anticipates resettling six separate refugee populations with an average of about 100 individuals from each group. A different option would be to resettle two or three populations of 200 or 300 individuals, seeking extended families within those numbers. The resettlement of larger groups from the same threatened populations would both strengthen families and encourage the development of ethnic communities that could provide mutual support during the resettlement period.

The government of New Zealand could also promote family reunification by providing options for assisting with the cost of transportation of refugee family members that are approved through existing processes. Some countries, including the United States, Canada and Australia, require refugees to repay the cost of transportation. Interest-free loans can be supported by the government through a revolving loan fund, administered by organisations like the International Organisation for Migration. Through such a process, refugee families could be more quickly reunified at a limited cost to the government.

3 SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES

Resettled refugees often reach their new countries with few material possessions. Some may have been in refugee camps for many years, unable to work or attend school, while others have fled wars or other crises. Arriving to a new country, they rarely know anyone and have little or nothing other than their own survival skills.

This section attempts to provide a framework for considering refugee resettlement activities in the United States and New Zealand. Before reviewing systems, it is important to understand the characteristics of the refugee populations.

There are similarities in the populations of refugees in both countries, in part because both accept referrals from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. However, different selection processes between the two countries, as well as geographic proximity to source countries for refugees, result in variations. While the country of origin may differ refugees often have much in common, including persecution, interrupted education, and the lingering effects of trauma and loss.

No uniform method exists to classify refugee characteristics. Instead, two published research studies provide a basis for comparison between NZ and the US. These studies measure several reasonably similar refugee characteristics at the time of arrival and after several years in country.

In 2004 the New Zealand Department of Labour published *Refugee Voices: A Journey Towards Resettlement*. This project interviewed 398 refugees, both “recently arrived” and “established”. “Recently arrived” refugees were interviewed after six months and again after two years in New Zealand, while “established refugees” had been in New Zealand for “around five years” at the time of interview.³⁴ Refugees were asked about their backgrounds, arrival experiences and their current lives including work experiences, education, housing and health care.

In the United States the Office of Refugee Resettlement presents an annual report to Congress. The most recent report available, the Annual Report to Congress FFY 2005, is based on a national sample of refugees selected from the population of all refugees who arrived between 1 May 2000 and 30 April 2005.³⁵ Data collected includes demographic information, such as age, country of origin, level of education, and English language training, job training, labour force participation, work experience and barriers to employment, for each adult member of the household.

While not precisely aligned these two documents represent contemporaneous sets of data that can provide some broad understanding of the similarities and differences between the refugee populations in the two countries on arrival, and after some time in their new homes.

³⁴ Dunstan (2004a), p.17

³⁵ Office of Refugee Resettlement (n.d.)

Characteristics of Refugees Arriving to New Zealand and the United States

Educational Experience

A key factor likely to influence the resettlement outcomes of refugees is educational experience prior to arrival. As Tables 1 and 2 below indicate, the educational backgrounds of the refugees arriving to the two countries are generally fairly similar.

Table 1: Educational Background of New Zealand Refugees

New Zealand - Refugee Voices 2004		
Years of Education	New Arrivals	Established Refugees
None	15%	24%
1 to 5	12%	13%
6 to 10	26%	23%
11 to 15	36%	33%
Over 15	11%	8%

Table 2: Educational Background of United States Refugees

US Refugee Survey	
2000-2005 Arrivals Surveyed	
None	21%
Primary School	20%
Secondary School	31%
Technical School	9%
University	11%

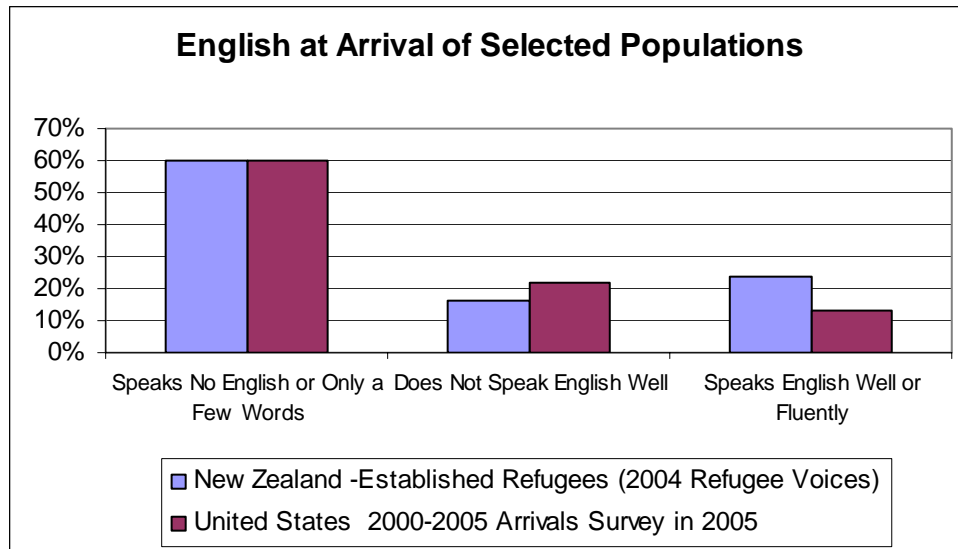
In both countries, many refugees arrive with no prior school experience or only primary school. Thirty-seven percent of New Zealand's established refugees and 27 percent of new arrivals had five years of schooling or less, compared to 41 percent of the US refugee population with no schooling or primary school only. In both countries only about one in ten refugees arrived with advanced education.

English Speaking Ability

Another critical factor for positive resettlement is English speaking ability, as those with English skills generally find it easier to access assistance and find work more quickly than those without. The surveys provided different options as answers to questions, making direct comparisons problematic. The New Zealand refugees were given a wider array of choices to describe their English speaking ability: "No More Than A few Words and Phrases", "Not Very Well", "Fairly Well", "Well" and "Very Well" whereas the US refugees had to choose between "Speaks No English", "Does Not Speak English Well" and "Speaks English Fluently". For the purposes of analysis, the New Zealand categories of "No More Than A few Words and Phrases" and "Not Very Well" are aggregated, as are "Well" and "Very Well". Difference in

collection methodologies aside, Figure 1 shows the similarities in the refugee groups in the two countries: both admit refugee populations in which the majority of the individuals arrive with limited or no English language skills.

Figure 1: English Language Skills at Arrival of Refugees in the United States and New Zealand



Two of the most significant variables that may influence economic success are education and English language ability. The United States and New Zealand confront fairly similar challenges in assisting refugees to become economically self-sufficient: a large percentage of newly-arrived refugees have very limited English skills and quite limited education.

The characteristics of the refugee populations require that receiving countries cannot simply treat refugees like other immigrants. In addition to the lingering effects of trauma and persecution, resettlement countries must determine how to assist refugees' transitions to integrated members of the larger community.

Assistance and Benefits for Refugees

Refugees need immediate assistance on arrival to a new country to obtain the most basic necessities, including shelter, food, and medical care. Refugees also need assistance in developing the skills or navigating the processes required to ensure that these needs will continue to be met. The level of assistance provided varies between countries, based in large part on each country's understanding of the social contract between the people and the government.

Since passage of the Social Security Act in 1938 New Zealand has established as the cultural norm that each individual has a right to a reasonable standard of living. New Zealand remains a strong example of the welfare state, with various social services available to the aged, caregivers, the unemployed and the disabled.

The United States, by contrast, assumes a less far-reaching government responsibility for individuals. The US Constitution and government structure was developed in the

context of ending a monarchy, and was based on the concept of a limited government. A sense of individual responsibility and individual reward is integral to the US character, and combined with a resentment of government confiscation of personal property through taxes. Many Americans fundamentally distrust social welfare programmes, which they see as the transfer of wealth from those who do strive and achieve to those who do not. This distrust is not based solely on the potential of paying more taxes, but also the impact of social welfare on ambition and the desire to work and achieve. Reward for work is seen as an element of independence and freedom. Americans also believe that the United States remains a land of opportunity in which anyone can achieve, with sufficient hard work or talent, so government largess is unnecessary for most people.

By contrast, in the words of Jon Johansson, Victoria University of Wellington lecturer in comparative politics, “Whenever there has been a choice between freedom and equality, Kiwis have chosen equality.”³⁶ The social contract that New Zealanders have with their government requires a minimum level of basic support for all. Government policy in New Zealand is focused on achieving that outcome, whereas US government policy seeks to encourage opportunity and self-reliance.

Social services for refugees, not surprisingly, reflect these characteristics of the social contract.

On-Arrival Support for Refugees

When refugees arrive at their destination provisions must be made for their introduction to their new home. Reception and placement services are designed to ensure refugees are placed into communities appropriate to their individual needs, particularly with regard to family and ethnic community. Reception services provide refugees with orientation to key elements of community life, including housing, educational requirements for children, and health care. Greater community needs are also addressed during this period, such as conducting medical screenings to ensure newly arrived refugees have no communicable diseases.

New Zealand – Intake Centre Model

Once refugees have arrived in New Zealand, initial resettlement services are delivered centrally through a partnership between government and non-government organisations. Immediately on arrival, refugees are housed at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre in Auckland. The Centre provides a six-week orientation to New Zealand life.

A community-based non-governmental organisation, RMS Refugee Resettlement, plays a key role in the resettlement process. RMS is under contract to the Department of Labour to provide on-arrival services at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre. These services include preparing individual settlement plans for each intake, conducting a needs assessment of each family, and preparing an “Intake Exit Report” for the regional RMS offices at the time the refugees leave Mangere.

³⁶ Johansson, Jon (2008)

At the Centre refugees receive an identity document, apply for a tax number, set up a bank account and apply for public benefits. The Auckland University of Technology (AUT) provides cultural orientation, English-language training, early childhood education, and primary and secondary schooling. AUT also completes an educational assessment for those who will be entering the school system.³⁷ All refugees receive a medical assessment, and medical care is available at an on-site clinic. Counselling/psychotherapy services are provided through the Refugees as Survivors Centre, a mental health agency funded through the Manukau District Health Board and private donations³⁸.

After six weeks refugees leave the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre and are resettled in selected communities throughout New Zealand. RMS recommends locations for settlement in consultation with Housing NZ, the Ministry of Education, and the Department of Labour. Among the factors considered in the settlement area allocation are the location of relatives or ethnic communities, the availability of housing through Housing New Zealand, local volunteer resources and community concerns.

RMS Refugee Resettlement offers services to refugees in the community through trained social workers, culturally and linguistically appropriate cross-cultural workers and volunteers. Volunteers are critical to the programme. RMS has developed a seventeen-and-a-half hour training programme that is approved by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, awarding a RMS Certificate in Refugee Resettlement Support.³⁹ RMS training covers:

- the refugee experience;
- the role of the RMS volunteer support worker;
- refugee cultures;
- support services and resources for refugees and their support workers; and
- refugee health and well-being and education.

RMS volunteers seek to maintain weekly contact with refugees for the first six months after arrival. The RMS social worker allocated to the refugee family or individual is required to make periodic visits during the first six months and develop an exit plan from initial settlement assistance between six and twelve months after arrival. Clients leave services when they are determined to no longer require RMS support and are capable of independent living. Nearly 50 percent of RMS clients are deemed to be ready to exit services at six months, and 60 percent exit services before nine months.⁴⁰ RMS also receives funding from the Ministry of Social Development to provide social work for refugees who continue to need assistance after the initial six-month period.

US – Decentralised and Devolved On-Arrival Support

In the US once refugees are approved for admission, resettlement placement decisions are made on a variety of factors. Resettlement agencies consider location of family members, pre-existing ethnic communities, the capacity of local resettlement

³⁷ Auckland University of Technology (n.d.)

³⁸ Refugees as Survivors (n.d.)

³⁹ RMS Refugee Resettlement (n.d.)

⁴⁰ *National RMS Quarterly Report to DOL Q3 01 January 2008 – 31 March 2008* (2008)

affiliates, individual refugee circumstances and community capacity as well as employment and educational opportunities. The Department of State has cooperative agreements with ten agencies to provide resettlement assistance:

- Church World Service
- Episcopal Migration Ministries
- Ethiopian Community Development Council
- Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
- International Rescue Committee
- Iowa State Bureau of Refugee Programs
- Immigration and Refugee Service
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
- United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
- World Relief⁴¹

These “voluntary agencies” have 350 local affiliates around the US that are part of the resettlement programme. Voluntary agencies accept specific responsibilities to newly arrived refugees under cooperative agreements with the Department of State. Agency representatives ensure arriving refugees are met at the airport by someone who speaks their language. After escorting them to their new home, case managers deliver a home safety orientation. During the first thirty days, voluntary agencies are required to provide basic furnishings, clothing, food, and housing. The agencies must arrange a medical screening within a limited time after arrival and refer the refugees to appropriate services. During the first 90 days, the agency must provide the following “core services”:⁴²

- development of a resettlement plan;
- monitoring implementation of the resettlement plan;
- basic orientation to the United States
 - public Services
 - public transportation
 - personal budgeting
 - family reunion procedures;
- permanent residence information;
- IOM loan requirements;
- referral for health screenings; and
- employment orientation and referral to employment assistance.

While New Zealand pays for the travel of refugees, the US arranges interest-free loans through the International Organization for Migration. Refugees are expected to repay the loans.

After the initial resettlement period, responsibility for refugees shifts from the Department of State to the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) and states, local communities and resettlement programmes. In some cases this becomes a distinction without a difference as the

⁴¹ *Fact Sheet – Refugee Admissions Reception and Placement Program (2007)*

⁴² *FFY2008 Reception and Placement Basic Terms of the Cooperative Agreement (2008)*

entity providing services, often the local affiliate of the voluntary agency, may remain the same while the funding source shifts from one federal agency to another. In other cases, the provider of services, particularly employment and ESOL assistance, changes entirely. In either case, formal or informal referral processes must be in place locally to ensure that refugee clients transition from the initial reception and placement assistance to resettlement services.

Social Welfare Benefits for Refugees

After the initial reception phase, both countries seek to establish more sustainable situations for refugees. A key challenge for resettlement countries is how to balance the needs of refugees with concerns for fairness to the host population. While there is little evidence of significant public opposition to providing assistance to refugees, host countries are generally wary of engendering resentment to refugees by providing “better” benefits than are available to long-term residents or citizens in need.

New Zealand– Generous Social Welfare Benefits

After the intensive orientation at the Mangere Refugee Centre and initial resettlement assistance through RMS Refugee Resettlement, refugees in New Zealand become eligible for a comparatively generous array of public benefits.

One of the most significant of those benefits is housing. Applications to the Housing New Zealand Corporation are prioritised based on factors of need, including affordability, adequacy, suitability, accessibility and sustainability. Refugees leaving Mangere are generally prioritised as high need and qualify for immediate housing.

Costs to a family under Housing New Zealand (HNZ) programmes cannot exceed 25 percent of income. Clients are permitted to remain in HNZ housing for as long as they wish, with costs increasing in real terms as income increases but remaining the same percentage of income. In resettlement communities without housing capacity through HNZ, private housing is arranged and an accommodation supplement available to ensure affordability.

Refugees are also eligible for an Emergency Benefit and a one-time re-establishment grant. Emergency benefits provide basic income maintenance assistance to refugees. Rates vary depending on age and family composition, but as an example a single adult over 25 years old could receive a weekly unemployment benefit of NZ\$178.⁴³ A one-time re-establishment grant of NZ\$1200 is available to refugees and asylees, as well as other applicants, provided they apply within 12 months of entry to New Zealand. The re-establishment grant is often used to purchase appliances and/or furniture.⁴⁴

If they do not receive the Emergency Benefit, refugees are potentially eligible for other benefits available to New Zealand citizens, including the Domestic Purpose Benefit for single parents, Unemployment or Sickness Benefits, and Accommodation Supplements. Refugees are also eligible for assistance with healthcare costs through a Community Service Card.

⁴³ Ministry of Social Development (n.d.)

⁴⁴ New Zealand rental properties are not customarily furnished with appliances, such as a refrigerator, that would normally be included in the rental fee of a furnished dwelling in the United States.

Refugees in New Zealand often avail themselves of these benefits. The 2004 study asked about the primary source of income in the last two weeks for “established refugees”, who had been in the country for about five years. Seventy-eight percent of respondents declared benefits were the primary income support, while only 19 percent pointed to wages and one percent to self-employment.⁴⁵

New Zealand social benefits provide a reasonable standard of living, allowing the provision of adequate housing, food and transportation plus access to medical care. In addition, child care is heavily subsidised, with twenty hours available free each week to children aged three and four years old.

US – Limits in Time and Amounts of Social Welfare Benefit

Since the 1996 welfare reforms, immigrants to the United States are generally ineligible for most public benefits. Special consideration was provided for refugees, allowing eligibility for certain benefits only during the initial resettlement years.

As in New Zealand, refugees must meet the same income and asset criteria as a citizen to receive benefits. If these conditions are met, refugees may receive:

- Food Stamps – a federal food assistance programme that provides needy individuals with benefits that can be used to purchase food.
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) – a joint federal/state cash assistance programme for indigent families with minor children. The programme requires participation in work or work activities and is generally limited to no more than 60 months, although there are hardship exemptions available. Benefit rates under TANF vary by state.
- Medicaid – a joint federal-state programme that provides medical benefits to individuals and families with limited resources and assets.
- Social Security Income – a federal cash assistance programme for aged, blind and disabled individuals with limited assets and income.⁴⁶

In addition, refugees may receive certain benefits unavailable to US citizens or other applicants. Non-disabled adults without minor children are generally ineligible for TANF or Medicaid, but refugees may receive equivalent benefits through the federally-funded Refugee Cash Assistance and Refugee Medical Assistance programmes. These programmes are strictly time-limited and available only for the first eight months after a refugee enters the country or is granted asylum. In many states cash assistance rates are very low relative to the cost of housing and transportation. For example, a single adult refugee with no dependents who met the financial qualifications for Refugee Cash Assistance in Miami, Florida would receive US\$180 per month in cash assistance, and could receive Food Stamps and time-limited medical assistance.

⁴⁵ Dunstan (2004a), pp.256-259

⁴⁶ Broder (2007)

Refugees may also be eligible for public housing, to the degree housing is available in a community, and other state or local benefits. Subsidised housing in most US communities has long waiting lists and is usually unavailable to recently arrived refugees.

The resettlement programme in the United States is focused on assisting new arrivals to become self-sufficient. Eligibility for cash assistance benefits is contingent on registering with an employment assistance provider to seek employment. Cash and medical assistance programmes adhere to strict timetables of eligibility and provide meagre benefits, ensuring that working at even a low-paid position is more profitable than collecting assistance benefits. Failure to register for work or accept employment results in the loss of benefits.

Refugees may also receive services through a federally-funded alternative to cash assistance called the Matching Grant programme. This programme allows higher benefits than may be available through state TANF programmes and emphasises early employment and self-sufficiency within the first six months. Since performance – measured in terms of client self-sufficiency – is a factor in continued funding for providers, some only offer this assistance to those clients who are most likely to go to work soon after arrival.

The general pattern in the US is for greater use of public benefits in the early stages of resettlement and a reduction in use of assistance as refugees become established and enter the work force. Some benefits, such as Food Stamps, have more generous eligibility criteria and may be accessed for a longer time. Of those surveyed in 2005, 26.8 percent indicated that they had received cash assistance in the last 12 months, 39 percent had received medical assistance, 52 percent had received Food Stamps and 11 percent had received housing aid.⁴⁷

Employment and Education Assistance

In addition to income maintenance and benefits, other government services can significantly influence the trajectory of a refugee's integration into the host community. Some countries mandate lengthy acculturation programmes – in Denmark, refugees are expected to spend three years learning Danish and developing an understanding of Danish culture, history and society.⁴⁸ Most governments choose less prescriptive paths and offer services to ease the transition, including language training, primary, secondary and tertiary education, and assistance in obtaining employment.

This section looks at the processes for providing these services to refugees in New Zealand and the United States. New Zealand has largely chosen to integrate refugees into mainstream services with specialised funding to institutions or programmes serving refugee clients. In the US the federal government leads a more programmatic response, with many services provided through specialised refugee programmes which are differentiated from mainstream programmes or even other programmes for immigrants or non-English speaking clients.

⁴⁷ Office of Refugee Resettlement (n.d.)

⁴⁸ Hedetoft, Ulf (n.d.)

NZ – Serving Refugees in Mainstream Programmes

While New Zealand’s reception and orientation for refugees is specialised, once refugees are in the community they rely largely on programmes that are either open to all New Zealanders or are directed at all migrants, including the highly skilled. This is particularly true for employment and adult education.

Employment Assistance

Refugees receiving social welfare benefits may find assistance through Work and Income, who can provide support and services to help them prepare for and transition to work. Work and Income provide some listed work referrals, but acknowledge that their listings represent just a small percentage of jobs available.

A number of entities offer specialised employment assistance for skilled migrants, some of whom receive funding from Work and Income, including the Auckland Chamber of Commerce, Auckland Regional Migrant Services, Canterbury Employers Chamber of Commerce, ESOL Home Tutors and Victoria University.

Unskilled migrants have fewer options. The Multicultural Centre for Learning and Support Services (MCLaSS) in Wellington, PEETO Intercultural Development Trust and Canterbury Employers Chamber of Commerce in Christchurch, and Auckland Regional Migrant Services offer assistance to non-skilled migrants. There are a small number of work experience programmes, through the Auckland Chamber of Commerce and Wellington City Council, which potentially provide qualifying migrants and refugees with references and training that may lead to future employment.

Career Services provides assistance to job-seeking migrants and refugees. This government agency offers help in preparing for the New Zealand job market, including CV preparation, information on employment agencies and referrals to training courses. There are a number of other entities who also provide workshops or other assistance for preparing a CV or enhancing interviewing skills.

The paucity of programmes designed specifically to assist refugees with work placement is reflected in the number of refugees not engaged in gainful employment. The Refugee Voices report echoed themes from other research indicating that refugees have a difficult time obtaining work in New Zealand. The survey showed that of “established refugees” who had been in New Zealand around five years, only 29 percent had participated in work in the previous seven days and another nine percent were seeking work, at a time when the national labour force participation rate was 66 percent. Seventy percent of the established refugees surveyed said that they had difficulties in obtaining paid work, and 78 percent were receiving income support.⁴⁹

Significantly, the same study indicated that refugees seemed to be seeking work on their own. The primary method for seeking work, both for new arrivals and for established refugees, was looking at job advertisements, seeking help from friends and

⁴⁹ Dunstan (2004a), p.235

family, and directly contacting employers. Only a small number cited Work and Income or Career Services.

The lack of employment and income growth, as well as the high housing costs in New Zealand, is reflected in housing choices. The Refugee Voices report showed that 115 of 117 “established refugees” surveyed were in rental housing.⁵⁰

English Language Training

Most refugees need assistance in learning English. A 2004 study showed that only 24 percent of refugees described their ability to speak English when they arrived in New Zealand as “Very Well”, “Well”, or “Fairly Well”.⁵¹

Refugees in New Zealand may access English language training through several different methods. Training is provided by a range of entities: universities, polytechnics, private organisations, adult and community education providers and ESOL Home Tutors. Many of these programmes are supported, in whole or in part, by government funding, but some charge fees to clients.

- Quota refugees over 18 years of age are eligible for English language training through Training Opportunities if they are registered with Work and Income.⁵² These programmes are work-focused and must lead to a national qualification. They include workplace learning and typically involve 30 hours a week or more of contact time with a tutor.
- Work and Income also offers English language programmes through Targeted Training and Work Readiness Programmes. Refugees qualify for Targeted Training services as “disadvantaged” clients by virtue of their immigration status.⁵³
- Refugee Study Grants funded by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) are available at 13 universities and polytechnics. To qualify, refugees must enrol in full or part time approved ESOL courses at designated participating institutions. Grants entitle refugees to up to a full year of study. In 2007, 372 scholarships were allocated.
- ESOL Home Tutors offer a variety of services to refugee communities.⁵⁴ Among the services are: ESOL Literacy for individuals who are not literate in their home language, 20 hours per week for 32 weeks; social English groups, 2 hours a week; ESOL Home Tutors for individuals who cannot attend classes, 1 hour per week.

The TEC also supports an ESOL Assessment and Access Specialist Service to assess language levels and provide referrals to appropriate classes. This assistance is

⁵⁰ Dunstan (2004a), p.118

⁵¹ Dunstan (2004a), p.196

⁵² Dunstan (2004a), p. 190

⁵³ Ministry of Social Development (n.d.-b)

⁵⁴ ESOL Home Tutors (n.d.)

available in Auckland, Manukau, Christchurch, Hamilton, Wellington and Hutt Valley.

The specialist may refer a refugee with English language needs to some of the resources named above or to Adult and Community Education programmes that offer ESOL courses and are available for migrants and refugees with varying levels of expertise in English. Some are funded through the Foundation Learning Pool, which provides assistance to tertiary education providers, not individual clients.

The central government also supports the Workplace Literacy Fund, which provides literacy, language and numeracy training integrated with vocational/workplace training. Data is unavailable on refugee participation in this programme.

Education for Children

Schools in New Zealand receive standard operational funding for each student enrolled, including refugee children. Schools may also apply for additional funding for students in need of language assistance for ESOL services. In 2008, 1,672 “refugee background” students were among the 29,096 ESOL students funded by the Ministry of Education.⁵⁵

In response to the particular needs of refugee students, the Ministry of Education makes available additional funding for which schools can apply on behalf of refugee children. Schools can receive NZ\$1,200 and NZ\$1,800 for primary/intermediate and secondary students, respectively, for their first two years enrolled in New Zealand schools, and NZ\$600 for primary/intermediate and NZ\$800 for secondary students for the third through fifth years.⁵⁶

Other funding options available to schools to support refugee children include a “flexible funding pool” that can be used for programmes like homework clubs, mentoring or bilingual liaisons, and Refugee Pathways and Careers funding for career planning support for refugee youth. The Ministry also supports refugee education coordinators in Auckland, Wellington and Hamilton to provide liaison services between schools, refugee communities and families.

Refugee Community Development

Beyond benefits to individuals, the New Zealand government also supports services to refugees and migrants through the Settling In programme administered by Family and Community Services at the Ministry of Social Development. This programme is designed to identify and support social services required by refugee groups, and develop the capacity of refugee and migrant communities. It supports a variety of projects based on locally identified needs, such as family strengthening programmes and refugee youth leadership development.

In addition, the Department of Labour supports Strengthening Refugee Voices, an initiative to promote sustainable engagement with refugee communities and provide opportunities for refugee communication and input into government policy.

⁵⁵ *What Government Offers to Support Your Settlement* (2008) p.13

⁵⁶ *ibid.*

US – Specialised Services for Refugees

Beyond income maintenance and medical benefits, refugees may receive other services to aid their resettlement. Many of these services are federally funded through Refugee Social Services and Targeted Assistance Grants provided to states to support refugee integration. In general, refugee clients remain eligible for refugee social services for up to five years after the date they enter the United States. Under the Immigration and Nationality Act, the provision of refugee resettlement assistance is explicitly focused on assisting refugees to become employed and self-sufficient:

In providing assistance under this section, the Director shall, to the extent of available appropriations, (i) make available sufficient resources for employment training and placement in order to achieve economic self-sufficiency among refugees as quickly as possible, (ii) provide refugees with the opportunity to acquire sufficient English language training to enable them to become effectively resettled as quickly as possible, (iii) insure that cash assistance is made available to refugees in such a manner as not to discourage their economic self-sufficiency, in accordance with subsection (e)(2), and (iv) insure that women have the same opportunities as men to participate in training and instruction.⁵⁷

The Federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) works in partnership with states and community organisations to promote self-sufficiency for eligible clients. Refugee resettlement funds are available not only to refugees, but also to asylees, Cuban and Haitian entrants and victims of human trafficking.

Some funds are allocated to states (or privatised organisations in certain states) according to a formula that reflects the population of refugee-eligible clients in each state. States have some discretion in the use of the funds, but performance is evaluated on refugee job placements, job retention, health benefits and reduced reliance on public benefits. States may receive additional funds for special populations or targeted activities.

States are permitted to use federal funding for other activities, including short-term vocational education designed to lead to employment in less than a year, English language training, case management, citizenship and naturalisation assistance, child care, and services designed to support employment. Refugee social services are commonly specialised services, not provided through the mainstream systems, in recognition of the unique linguistic and cultural needs of refugee clients. ORR regulations, in fact, require that services funded through federal social service dollars be “refugee-specific.”⁵⁸ Consultation with local communities and refugee populations is required no less than quarterly.

Employment

Many resettlement programmes use federal funding to contract for specialised employment assistance for refugees. Employment services cover:

⁵⁷ *Authorization for Programs for Domestic Resettlement of and Assistance to Refugees* (n.d.)

⁵⁸ *Authorization for Programs for Domestic Resettlement of and Assistance to Refugees* (n.d.)

- Job orientation – providing an introduction to American employment norms and expectations, including concepts of promptness, expected dress and behaviour, instruction in preparing a resume or job application and job interview skills.
- Job development – working with local employers and employer organisations to identify need for workers, organising work groups and language assistance within job sites.
- Job placement – matching refugees to employment opportunities, assisting with interviews, explaining/translating work requirements to new employees.
- Monitoring – working with refugees and employers to promote job retention and advancement.

Some specialised refugee employment programmes use on-the-job training, which may include payment of some or all of an employee's salary for a pre-determined training period. Other specialised programmes focus on enhancing an employee's skills to assist in obtaining a job upgrade or new opportunities.

The focus on services designed to assist refugees in obtaining employment, combined with very low benefits, results in very high percentages of refugees working soon after arrival. In a survey of the five-year refugee population the ORR reported that 78 percent of refugees 16 years old and over were working. Of these working refugees, 17 percent started within a month of arrival and almost half (42 percent) found work within the first three months. By six months 63 percent had found employment and by the end of the first year, 81 percent were in a job.⁵⁹

One of the positive outcomes of participation in work can be seen in home ownership. According to the 2005 Report to Congress, 20 percent of the five year refugee population in the US owned their own home or apartment. Within the five year population home ownership rates varied, with a high of 30 percent for arrivals from the first year of the population cohort (2000) compared to nearly nine percent of those who arrived in 2005.⁶⁰

English Language Training

Under the Adult and Family Literacy Act of the Workforce Investment Act, most individuals over the age of 16 who are unable to speak, read or write in English are eligible for English language instruction through local mainstream adult education providers. In addition to formula funding for adult education, funding has been granted to states to establish English Language and Civics Education to promote the rights and responsibilities of citizenship within English language classes. In the academic year 2004/2005, the most recent year with available data, of the 2.5 million

⁵⁹ Office of Refugee Resettlement (n.d.)

⁶⁰ Office of Refugee Resettlement (n.d.)

US participants in state administered adult education, more than 1.1 million, or 44 percent, were participating English language studies.⁶¹

A variety of other providers deliver English language training in the United States, from community colleges to for-profit language institutes to community-based literacy organisations to ethnic community groups. As a result, the total number of participants in English language education is much higher.

In any community in the United States the availability of English language training depends on a number of factors, including state and local funding methods and enrolment schemes. Some states, particularly those with large immigrant or non-English speaking populations have significant resources available and open access, while others have waiting lists.⁶² There have been concerns raised in some communities about the capacity of the programmes to meet the needs of the growing non-English speaking population,⁶³ the qualifications of ESOL instructors, and diverse learner goals and irregular attendance.⁶⁴

Most ESL providers report that they do not charge fees or charge very low fees for English language training.⁶⁵ Many receive funds from federal and/or state adult education or literacy grants. Some state refugee resettlement programmes also use federal refugee funding to supplement mainstream English language training for refugee clients to ensure not only access to training but also to a curriculum tailored to refugee needs. Refugee-specific English language training has been developed to ensure training is relevant to refugees by combining English learning with citizenship or community orientation. There are few “home tutor” programmes in most states, but support services for English language training, including bus passes and child care, are available in some communities.

Access to English language training as well as immersion in the workplace and American society both have a significant impact on English language acquisition. In the 2005 survey of refugees who had arrived in the previous five years, nearly 60 percent of refugees indicated that they spoke no English when they arrived, while only 13 percent spoke fluent English. At the time of the survey, which ranged from less than a year to five years after arrival, 44 percent claimed that they had achieved fluency while less than 20 percent said they spoke no English.⁶⁶ It is likely that some of those not yet fluent in English in the survey are Cuban and Latin American refugees who resettled to bilingual communities in Florida like Miami, where there is less economic pressure to learn English.

Education for Children

Refugee children enrol in local public schools as soon after entry into the country as possible. As a result of a 1962 US Supreme Court decision, any child, regardless of immigration status, may enrol in public primary and secondary schools. The ORR

⁶¹ *Enrolment and Participation in State Administered Adult Education Programs* (October 2007)

⁶² Tucker, James (2006)

⁶³ McHugh, Margie (2007)

⁶⁴ Burt, Miriam (2007)

⁶⁵ Center for Applied Linguistics (2002)

⁶⁶ Office of Refugee Resettlement (n.d.)

offers Refugee School Impact Grants to fund activities including after-school programmes, parental involvement, bilingual/bicultural counsellors, or other services such as interpretation and ESOL.

States use School Impact Grants in a variety of ways. New York has created a curriculum and resources for Refugee Academies in individual schools. The academies provide refugee children and parents with an introduction to American schools, their rules and expectations and offer an opportunity for parents to meet teachers, ESOL instructors, guidance counsellors and other individuals with whom their children may interact.⁶⁷ Other states provide funding directly to schools or to community-based organisations, often resettlement agencies, to work with refugees enrolled in primary and secondary schools.

Federal and state funding formulas also provide extra funding to schools for children in need of ESOL assistance. Federal funding to states through the English Language Acquisition⁶⁸ grants provides assistance to local schools for research-based language instruction programmes. Individual states also provide funding for Limited English Proficient (LEP) students.

⁶⁷ New York Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (n.d.)

⁶⁸ *English Language Assistance State Grants* (n.d.)

4 ANALYSIS OF SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES

The processes and outcomes of refugee resettlement in the US and New Zealand are influenced by many factors. One significant factor is simply the size of the programmes. In New Zealand the small number of arrivals allows the reception centre process that would be impractical in the United States. In the US the large number of refugees and other individuals eligible for services under the resettlement programme allows for specialised programmes for employment and education that might not be possible in New Zealand. Other differences result more from differences in social welfare, population diversity and educational systems.

Placement Policy

Community placement decisions can be controversial, as government interests are balanced with refugee concerns and local community requirements. In New Zealand, there has recently been discussion among policy-makers about increasing the number of communities to which refugees are referred. There are advantages to a shared responsibility for refugees, including potential political support for necessary programmes and interventions. At the same time, any increase in the number of communities in which refugees are resettled places additional demand for specialised services (such as RMS), interpreters and cultural competency in more communities. Increasing the number of locations and providing the same level of services will inevitably increase the need for resources and consequently the costs.

Placement decision-making needs to consider how dispersing small ethnic groups affects refugee communities. The Department of Labour's own research shows that "recent migrants are likely to settle in areas with a higher than average proportion of migrants from their region of origin."⁶⁹ People have a natural desire to associate with others from the same cultural traditions and frame of reference. It is important to create a sufficient ethnic community to provide support and prevent the isolation of small groups of refugees.

It may also be an appropriate time to consider additional research on the impact of placement decisions on refugee outcomes. One factor in determining placement has been the availability of housing through Housing New Zealand, both to ensure sustainable housing for refugee families and to influence the pool of available housing among communities. Further research might explore if the availability of housing is inversely related to other economic indicators, such as employment and access to education that may affect refugee integration.

On Arrival Support

The US and New Zealand employ very different models to deliver cultural orientation and on-arrival services. The New Zealand model provides more consistent and comprehensive orientation and initial services through the stay at Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre. Refugee groups arrive in specific scheduled time frames that allow preparation and planning for each intake. The six-week stay at the refugee

⁶⁹ *Settlement Patterns and the Geographic Mobility of Recent Migrants to New Zealand* (2008)

centre provides an opportunity to carry out medical screening, and to assess client needs and prepare communities for refugee arrivals.

There are unintended consequences to New Zealand's centralised intake and orientation process. Most refugee resettlement activities, including health assessments, housing and education referrals and connections to community resettlement assistance, for quota refugees begin at the Centre. Individuals who are similarly situated to refugees, including asylees and family reunification refugees, lack access to these services. There have been proposals to extend reception and orientation services to some or all of these similarly needy clients, but capacity, timing of entry and funding streams make it difficult to provide orientation to groups other than quota refugees.

English Language Training

English language training and other tertiary level education for refugees are perhaps two of the most challenging issues. In the United States concern is growing about the amount and quality of English language training available as immigration increases.⁷⁰ Academic and policy discussions debate the efficacy and cost of providing first-language literacy before English language training and methods to tailor course content to the refugees' workplace environment rather than focus on grammar and academic English.

English language and tertiary education concerns in New Zealand appear to focus on a few key issues related to government policy and funding:

- *Availability and affordability of courses for qualifying students.* Fixed levels of tuition subsidy generally limit the availability of adult and tertiary education. One provider indicated that some 80 to 100 refugees were on a waiting list for refugee study grants due to an insufficient number of grants available.
- *Accessibility of education for refugees with limited English and limited literacy in home language.* Some central government funding schemes are limited to higher level courses.⁷¹ Refugee service providers raised concerns at the Wellington Regional Refugee Resettlement Forum that no classes were available for refugee clients with low level English.
- *Relevant course content and timing.* A number of concerns exist on English course content, including questions of relevance to the workplace and the needs of clients. Refugees are more likely to succeed in English training courses that teach not only English language skills but also provide orientation and information relevant to getting along in a new environment.⁷² Additional concerns were raised about the availability of classes that were part-time, available after work hours, or aligned with child care.⁷³

⁷⁰ McHugh, Margie (2007)

⁷¹ Shriner, Janice (2007)

⁷² Teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages (2000), p.8

⁷³ *English Language for Adults: Goal 3, Auckland Regional Settlement Strategy* (n.d.)

The Tertiary Education Commission assists refugees in navigating through the complex system of English language providers through the English Language Assessment and Access Specialists. As a part of the Settlement National Action Plan, the Commission and the Ministry of Social Development are developing an analysis of the available resources for English training, the needs of non-English speakers and any gaps that exist between them. Such an effort will provide policy-makers with the tools necessary to take action to address community needs.

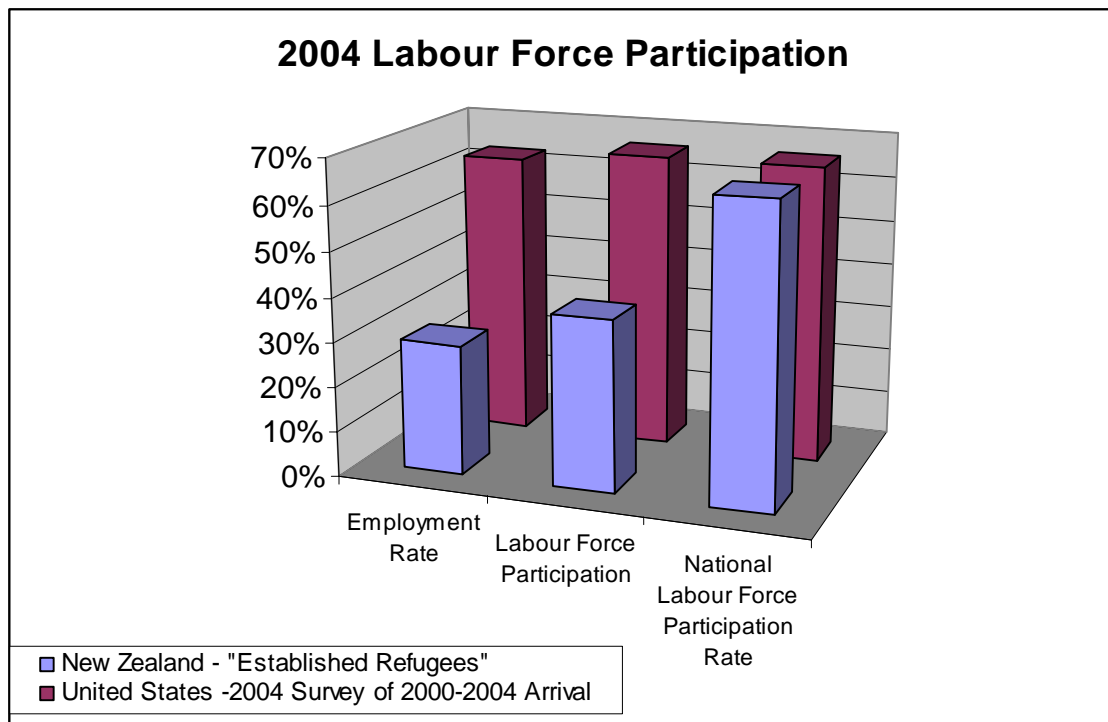
Social Welfare Benefits and Employment

In both the United States and New Zealand, refugee resettlement programmes have evolved within the context of the larger government and social system. In the US support for refugee admissions and services has been seen as contingent upon the understanding that refugees would quickly become self-sufficient. The social service system in the US expects self-sufficiency from its citizens – that expectation is translated into stringent qualifications for disability benefits, participation in work activities as a requirement for welfare, and time limits on assistance. The US public would not countenance the arrival of 50,000 to 100,000 new refugees and asylees each year if they were expected to support them indefinitely. The emphasis of US resettlement efforts is clear and unequivocal: self-sufficiency.

New Zealand faces rather different circumstances. The relatively small numbers of refugees admitted are able to live fairly comfortably on the same benefits that New Zealanders can receive. No clear principle exists defining self-sufficiency as a goal for refugees nor is a system in place to achieve it. Given these factors, the difference in outcomes between the two countries is unsurprising.

Figure 2 demonstrates the difference in labour force participation between the United States and New Zealand. The Employment Rate shows only those refugees who are working, while Labour Force Participation definitions include refugees who are working as well as those who are looking for work. The National Labour Force Participation rate is provided for comparison with the overall rate in the country.

Figure 2: Labour Force Participation of Refugees in the US and New Zealand in 2004



In New Zealand only 29 percent of refugees were employed and another nine percent were seeking work, for a total refugee labour force participation rate of 38 percent. By comparison, the US refugee employment rate in 2004 was 63 percent, with an additional three percent looking for work. The total labour force participation rate for refugees was the same as the US national average of 66 percent.

There are many potential reasons for the significant difference in participation rates between refugees in New Zealand and the United States. One theory is that differences in the education credentials and English capacity of refugees resettled to the two countries are the basis for the differing results. However the refugees' characteristics on arrival, described earlier, appear to be fairly similar, and certainly not disparate enough to be the basis for marked difference in outcomes.

A second theory that has been advanced is that New Zealand employers are less willing to hire immigrant workers, where American employers are more accustomed to doing so. In 2006 immigrants made up approximately 15 percent of the US labour force,⁷⁴ whereas foreign-born workers were 24 percent of the labour force in New Zealand in 2007.⁷⁵ If the percentage of the labour force were the causal variable then one would expect that New Zealand would have higher labour force participation.

Diversity is another facet of immigration that must be considered. New Zealand's immigrant labour force includes large numbers of workers from the United Kingdom and Australia, immigrants who are seen as very similar to New Zealanders. These

⁷⁴ Council of Economic Advisors (2007)

⁷⁵ *Labour Market Statistics: 2007* (2008)

immigrants amounted to 7.7 percent of the labour force in 2007.⁷⁶ If these immigrants are excluded from consideration, other immigrants still account for a slightly higher percentage of the labour force in New Zealand (16 percent) than the United States (15 percent). Clearly, New Zealand employers are not reluctant to hire all immigrants, even those from places other than Australia or the UK.

A third theory relates to reasons that employers may have to avoid hiring refugees: occupational health and safety requirements (including language), language barriers generally and refugee skills mismatched to the labour market. Each of these reasons may explain why refugees may be less employable than other immigrants in New Zealand, but fail to explain the disparity between the US and New Zealand.

It is likely that the difference in employment and job-seeking by refugees is caused by a combination of factors. One significant factor is the social welfare system. The reality is that in New Zealand one can survive to a reasonable standard on benefits alone, although recent price increases have eroded purchasing power. Individuals receiving benefits in the US are much less able to obtain a reasonable standard of living, and most face time restrictions for receiving benefits.

Equally important, however, is the absence of a clear policy that employment and self-sufficiency are goals for refugees, along with a comprehensive system to make it a reality. There is no consistent process to provide specialised services to assist refugees to gain employment opportunities, or to prepare them for employment in the New Zealand workplace and ease the transition to work, through job placement services, mentoring or other assistance. A few programmes engage in some elements of these activities, but most refugees are left to find work on their own, through friends and family or through a mainstream system that may be unprepared for the specific linguistic and cultural needs of refugees.

Opportunity to Act

New Zealand has a unique opportunity to address these issues in the refugee resettlement process at this moment. The Settlement National Action Plan, which will be discussed further in the next section, initiated a review of refugee resettlement to provide a “common direction (at a national level) to support ongoing collaboration” to “guide the selection, resettlement and integration of refugees” and “identify the relative priorities at different stages of resettlement.”⁷⁷

The process of developing priorities for the integration of refugees provides an opportunity to review the existing processes, particularly given the changing economic conditions in New Zealand. There has been a dramatic increase in the national employment rate and a decrease in overall receipt of unemployment benefits, from 100,986 recipients in 2003 to 19,034 in 2008. Refugees, nonetheless, continue to find it difficult to access employment. An April 2008 report on refugees who arrived nearly a year earlier (in May 2007) showed little improvement in job acquisition.⁷⁸ Of 64 adults in the arriving group, only one had obtained full-time employment and four

⁷⁶ *ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Settlement National Action Plan* (n.d.)

⁷⁸ *National RMS Quarterly Report to DOL Q3 01 January 2008 – 31 March* (2008)

were in part-time jobs. Eleven others, 26 percent of the adults, were seeking work but had not yet found a job.

The number of refugees receiving unemployment benefits has declined, but refugees still constitute a disproportionate number of benefit recipients. A 2006 analysis of immigrant recipients of benefits showed that quota refugees were 13 percent of all immigrants receiving benefits, even though quota refugees account for only about 1.5 percent of annual permanent resident admissions.⁷⁹

The employment arena raises particular concerns, however, since few programs are devoted to assisting refugees to transition into New Zealand employment. While some refugees with English, educational credentials or professions may find assistance through programs focusing on the wider migrant population, the refugee population without those advantages may need services that provide connections to employers, mentoring and initial language assistance.

A focus on outcomes may help to identify employment services that succeed in developing both immediate work opportunities and career paths for refugees, and ultimately facilitate the development of such services.

⁷⁹ Hodgson, Rob (2006)

5 REFUGEES AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION PROGRAMMES

Global migration and national integration programmes

The migration of people between countries is a significant and growing phenomenon. The International Organization for Migration estimates that there were 191 million migrants worldwide in 2005, comprising three percent of the global population.⁸⁰ Migration patterns are not uniform throughout the world, however, and the impact is far greater in some countries than others. Migrants represented 15.2 percent of the population in Oceania, 13.5 percent in North America and 8.8 percent in Europe, while other countries, including China, India, and the Philippines see a net loss in population due to emigration.⁸¹

Global migration is largely driven by economic differences between source nations and destination countries. New Zealand and the United States are nations to which migrants are drawn by the promise of jobs, freedom, education and a higher standard of living.

Migration is important not only to individual migrants but also to the economies of the countries involved. Economists in the US and New Zealand point out that immigration generally has a positive net economic impact, although that fact may not always be clear to the general public. A study by Business and Economics Research Limited for the NZ Department of Labour showed a positive net fiscal impact of migrants of over NZ\$3 billion.⁸² More critically, migrants help meet economic demand for both skilled and unskilled labour in New Zealand.

According to a March 2008 Department of Labour report, skill and labour shortages are “widespread” in New Zealand, including highly skilled professionals, less skilled labourers, and agriculture and fishery workers.⁸³ In recognition of the need for migrant workers New Zealand has recently implemented a short-term visiting worker scheme to enable certain workers to enter the country, in addition to existing employment-based immigration.

The labour situation in the United States has been subject to greater debate. Some industries, including agriculture, information technology and construction, have demonstrated clear evidence of occasional labour shortages. Questions remain as to whether labour shortages are structural or if they should be seen as market corrections due to inadequate wages vis-à-vis international markets.⁸⁴ Since there is no consensus on whether a labour shortage exists, consensus is also lacking on the role immigration policy should play in resolving the shortage. That lack of consensus has resulted in government inaction on immigration.

⁸⁰ *International Organization for Migration* (n.d.-a)

⁸¹ *International Organization for Migration* (n.d.-b)

⁸² Slack, Adrian (August 2007)

⁸³ *Survey of Employers Who Have Recently Advertised Skills Shortages: Occupations in Shortage in New Zealand* (2008)

⁸⁴ *Universia Knowledge Wharton* (n.d.)

The appropriate level of immigration in the United States is a controversial political issue, raising concerns for security, broad economic issues and individual job fears, as well as questions of culture and the balance of business needs against family reunification concerns. Re-positioning US immigration policy to focus on employment would represent a fundamental shift in the philosophy of immigration. Immigration in the US has traditionally been based heavily on family ties, with some 65% of each year's permanent residents approved through family connections.⁸⁵ By way of comparison, New Zealand's family-based immigration accounts for less than a third of permanent residents.⁸⁶ International competition for skilled labour raises the spectre of shifting that balance in the US, with an increased bias to employment-based immigration.

Under existing immigration schemes, migrants arriving to both the US and New Zealand are more diverse than previous generations. Many are settling in communities other than traditional immigrant gateways. These factors have raised concerns among certain segments of the population. In the US a not insignificant anti-immigration movement exists, expressed through means as diverse as state and local government attempts to regulate immigrants, to the formation of vigilante organisations seeking to enforce immigration laws.

Public sentiment on immigration issues in New Zealand has been less vocal or extreme, but there have been examples of anti-immigrant sentiment. Peter Brown, a Member of Parliament from the NZ First Party, which has a founding principle of limiting immigration, created controversy in February 2008 by publicly condemning high levels of Asian immigration.⁸⁷ Mr Brown is, himself, an immigrant to New Zealand.

While Mr Brown's comments were widely condemned in New Zealand, they speak to a larger issue that has developed in many countries with increased immigration from new source countries. Some communities have raised concerns about the creation of ethnic enclaves, others worry about the effect of an increasing diversity of cultures on social cohesion. Muslims in Europe, Hispanics in the United States and Asians in New Zealand are just a few of the groups that are seen as too many, too different and insufficiently integrated into the larger society.

Many of these criticisms are clearly unsupported. There have been periods of higher immigration than today – in the early 1900s the foreign-born were a higher percentage of the US population than today.⁸⁸ New Zealand had similar waves of immigration, beginning in the late 1800s and again in the early 1900s while there was a very small population of native-born New Zealanders.

In both countries early waves of immigrants came largely from Europe. Immigration from other regions was largely discouraged. The United States passed its first restrictions on immigration in 1882 with the Chinese Exclusion Act, which established a moratorium on Chinese labour immigration. In 1920 New Zealand

⁸⁵ Jeffreys, Kelly (March 2008)

⁸⁶ *Migration Trends 2005/06* (2006)

⁸⁷ 'Asian Population Growth Shows Inundation Danger –MP', *The Timaru Herald*, 2 April 2008

⁸⁸ Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (n.d.)

passed the Immigration Restriction Amendment Act to exclude those without British or Irish heritage.⁸⁹

Many ethnic groups started in what would today be considered ethnic enclaves: Irish in Boston, Scots in Dunedin, Italians in New York, Dalmatians in Dargaville, Spanish in Florida, Chinese in Arrowtown. Integration of earlier waves of immigrants was not always easy. Laws allowed specific discrimination against some groups and others were victims of bias and mistrust. There were institutions that helped to pave the way for immigrant integration, including churches, public school systems, labour unions and political parties. Many of those institutions play less significant roles in society today.

Nations are beginning to confront these new migration realities. Some governments seek to enforce cultural uniformity in the midst of the arrival of large numbers of migrants with languages, religions and cultures different from the majority population. Others countries have experienced unrest in immigrant communities due to the perception that their needs are inadequately addressed by the host government. Other governments take active steps to ease migrant settlement or ensure adequate labour pools. Some national efforts have been informal, ad-hoc responses while others have been made national policy. More and more, governments are seeking mechanisms to address these issues through strategic government integration programmes.

Defining Integration and Integration Programmes

The terms used to describe the process of newcomers interacting with the host society have become controversial in recent years. Where some see happily diverse multicultural societies others see ethnic enclaves that do not interact with the larger community. Some policy-makers prefer the term assimilation, which carries with it the idea that immigrants must abandon their native culture and adopt the norms of the dominant society. Perhaps the least controversial alternative is the term integration, which recognises the need for adaptation of both the host community and new arrivals.

An organisation of foundations interested in migration issues, Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR), provides a useful definition of integration as “a dynamic two-way process in which newcomers and the receiving society work together to build secure, vibrant and cohesive societies.”⁹⁰

Translating that definition into effective action is challenging, but more and more governments are engaged in the process. The European Union has made significant strides in establishing a framework for integration among its member states. In 2004 the European Council adopted a set of Common Basic Principles of immigrant integration designed to guide European integration efforts. These principles are included in the Appendix.

⁸⁹ Phillips, Jock (2008)

⁹⁰ Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (n.d.)

The interpretation of these basic principles into government policy has taken some interesting paths. Some countries have chosen very prescriptive routes, requiring certain actions (learning a language, completing culture classes) in specified time frames. Other countries have taken a less formal approach of offering tools to integration but not enforcing their use. Whether mandatory or voluntary, most integration programmes include some or all of the following elements:

- Vision – A defined policy supporting immigrant integration, setting forth responsibilities of both arriving immigrants and host communities. Some policies define which immigrants are covered by the integration programme, distinguishing between legal and undocumented migrants or between voluntary and involuntary migrants. Other visions incorporate core values that a country wishes new immigrants to share.
- Statement of Rights and Responsibilities – A pronouncement of the legal rights of immigrants and definition of clear processes for enforcement of those rights to prevent discrimination, unfair treatment or exploitation. Some integration programmes include statements of basic human rights, including religious liberty, political participation and the rule of law.
- Economic Well-Being – A definition of the responsibilities of immigrants to become self-sufficient and the responsibility of the host community to establish mechanisms that assist them in doing so.
- Civics Education – A description of processes to communicate key social concepts, such as cultural values, social norms and expectations or government processes. Some governments offer voluntary education while others make civic education compulsory.
- Information and referral – Provision of linguistically appropriate information, and recognition that immigrants are often unaware of the availability of services.
- Interpreters and Translation – Some governments establish rights of immigrants to communicate with government in their own language, while others provide for methods of obtaining interpretation or translation services in certain circumstances.
- Language and Education – Many integration policies include a statement emphasising the need for a common language. Integration programmes may establish the processes through which immigrants can or must acquire the language of the majority culture and other skills necessary for full participation.

Some governments try to achieve several of these goals simultaneously through introduction programmes that include language, civics education and labour-market training.⁹¹ There is a trend in parts of Europe to make these elements mandatory for new arrivals. Germany requires certain new immigrants to take integration courses,

⁹¹ *Handbook on Integration for Policymakers and Practitioners* (2007)

including language, or face reductions in benefits or difficulties in renewing residency. In Denmark, compulsory introduction courses last for up to three years and benefits may be reduced if an immigrant fails to attend. Punitive actions against immigrants who fall short of integration goals have become the norm in many countries.

Impact of National Integration Strategies on Refugees

Refugees, as the most vulnerable of migrants, have a considerable stake in the implementation of integration programmes. As involuntary migrants, they do not have the luxury of weighing national policies on integration before accepting refuge.

Refugees stand to benefit from some aspects of immigrant integration. Programmes that provide additional resources for services to immigrants may afford more help to refugees. In particular, government resources aimed at supporting language learning and appropriate employment can impart significant benefit to refugees. Additionally, government attention to improving the responsiveness of mainstream services for immigrants can greatly assist refugees. Refugees may also gain from regulations assuring equal rights for immigrants, and mechanisms that enforce prohibitions against discrimination based on national origin or language capabilities. Perhaps most important, government acknowledgement of immigrants as important and necessary contributors to society can provide leadership in shaping public opinion to value all immigrants, including refugees.

Integration policies also pose some risks to refugees. Those that require benchmarks within set time frames, place punitive measure on the failure to achieve those benchmarks, or withhold services or benefits (including citizenship benefits) can most harshly affect refugees with limited education, fewer language skills, those who are elderly and the most traumatised. Prescribed activities or results may limit the freedom of refugees to focus on recovery or economic security if they are required to attend specific classes or prepare for examinations.

There are other, less-obvious potential effects of national integration policies. Countries with long-standing refugee resettlement programmes have often developed formal and informal networks designed to ensure that refugee needs are met. These networks are focused on relatively small and discrete groups of refugees and can significantly enhance service provision, problem resolution and the development of a community response to refugees.

If these networks shift their focus to a broader range of immigrant concerns, their attention to the needs that are particular to refugees may be diluted. Networks designed for refugee issues may be called upon to address the diverse needs of larger immigrant populations, including such things as the underemployment of skilled migrants.

Even when new networks are developed for immigrant integration, refugees may be unable to take advantage of services. In general, refugee needs are greater than other immigrants, and they arrive with fewer resources. Refugees are commonly a small minority even among other migrants, particularly with regard to language.

Government responses to language needs tend to address only the largest language population, often neglecting the needs of refugee communities.

National integration strategies hold some promise for refugees if they are implemented in a manner that improves access and support to refugees. However, they also have the potential to become another impediment to freedom if they impose additional requirements on refugees, particularly if those requirements are excessive in the context of refugees' lives.

Integration in the United States

The United States and New Zealand have generally concentrated on voluntary efforts and avoided mandatory participation schemes for migrants. The US has a well-established refugee resettlement programme, which provides services to promote self-sufficiency for new refugees, as discussed in the previous chapter. In 2007 President George Bush announced the formation of a Task Force on New Americans to guide federal efforts to help migrants “fully become Americans.”⁹² A final report from the Task Force is expected this year and is anticipated to call for a national integration strategy for the United States.

In the interim integration efforts have fallen to other levels of government and several states have begun integration efforts. In 2005 the Governor of Illinois signed a “New Americans Executive Order” requiring agencies of the state to develop plans to assist immigrants to overcome barriers to success. An initial report set forth strategic recommendations relating to education, employment, citizenship and accessibility of services for newcomers.

The State of Washington recently created a two year New Americans Policy Council to recommend how the state could “more effectively integrate immigrants into the community.”⁹³ The Governor of New Jersey created a blue-ribbon panel to advise state government on a “comprehensive and strategic state-wide approach to successfully integrate the rapidly growing immigrant population.”⁹⁴ In Colorado immigrant integration efforts have been led by a foundation that began with the idea of strengthening immigrant families. Many of these programmes, however, are in their infancy compared to the New Zealand Settlement Strategy.

NZ Settlement Strategy

New Zealand's history and continuing tradition as a migrant nation underpins the need for a national strategy. Former Minister of Immigration Paul Swain said it rather simply, “New Zealand is a country that has been built through immigration, and immigration is vital for New Zealand's future well-being.”⁹⁵ NZ has one of the highest proportions of foreign-born residents: nearly one in four New Zealand residents was born elsewhere. Each year some 50,000 people are approved for permanent residence in New Zealand.

⁹² The White House (June 2007)

⁹³ Hate Free Zone (2007)

⁹⁴ Office of the Governor, New Jersey (August 2008)

⁹⁵ Dunstan (2004b)

At the same time emigration from New Zealand has been significant, causing concern over the availability of a sustainable workforce. In the year ending December 2007 there were 82,600 “permanent and long-term”⁹⁶ arrivals and 77,100 departures, resulting in a net increase of 5,500 people.⁹⁷ While the departure numbers include people who are leaving temporarily, the number of residents leaving is an issue gaining government attention, particularly a net outflow of 28,600 individuals to Australia. Australia serves as an immigration destination for many New Zealanders, offering a larger community and higher salaries, but near enough to maintain contact with friends and family in New Zealand.

New Zealand is experiencing shortages of labour, and not solely the highly skilled labour for which many countries are in competition. Another trend is a shortage of unskilled labour, including dairy workers, fruit pickers and service industries.

In economic terms NZ values the investment, labour and international connections and trade opportunities that migrants bring. The government also recognises the increasingly global nature of markets and labour, and the reality that geography is less a limiting factor for business and investment than ever before. This policy is supported by organisations like the Wellington Chamber of Commerce, which has publicly called for increased immigration.⁹⁸

In non-economic terms the New Zealand government values the vibrancy that a diverse population brings. The Office of Ethnic Affairs was created to “encourage and promote the strengths and benefits” offered by the more than 200 ethnic communities in New Zealand.⁹⁹

In light of continuing emigration and the clear economic need for workers, the New Zealand government sees successful immigration as necessary to the country’s prosperity. New Zealand is one of the first nations not only to recognise the need for positive settlement outcomes for migrants, but also to develop wide-ranging government policy to support immigrant integration.

The New Zealand Settlement Strategy, and the associated Settlement National Action Plan, sets forth a collaborative framework to assist new arrivals as well as New Zealanders and their communities to improve settlement outcomes.

The Settlement Strategy was designed to assist New Zealand to remain internationally competitive and enhance the nation’s social development through a coordinated approach in assisting new migrants to be fully integrated in New Zealand society. The Strategy’s seven goals are that migrants and refugees:

- are accepted and respected by host communities for their diverse cultural backgrounds and their community interactions are positive;
- obtain employment appropriate to their qualifications and skills;

⁹⁶ “Permanent and long term” are those who intend to stay permanently or more than a year in New Zealand, and residents of the country returning after being gone for a year or more.

⁹⁷ *External Migration: December 2007* (2008), p.6

⁹⁸ Wellington Regional Chamber of Commerce (February 2005)

⁹⁹ *Strength in Diversity: The Work of the Office of Ethnic Affairs* (n.d.), p.6

- are confident using English in a New Zealand setting, or can access appropriate language support to bridge the gap;
- are able to access appropriate information and responsive services that are available to the wider community (for example housing, education, and services for children);
- form supportive social networks and establish a sustainable community identity;
- feel safe expressing their ethnic identity and are accepted by, and are part of, the wider host community; and
- participate in civic, community and social activities.¹⁰⁰

Many of these goals build on existing programmes or efforts within the government. A new programme, Settlement Support New Zealand (SSNZ), supports the goal of access to appropriate information and responsive services which are available to the wider community. The targets of these services are migrants in the first two years of settlement and refugees in the first three years after arrival in New Zealand.

A 2004 study of New Zealand migrants revealed that migrants felt there was a need for settlement assistance.¹⁰¹ More than 60 percent of migrants surveyed responded that they needed “help, advice or information” during their initial period in the country. They needed help with education or training, finding employment, taxes, health, government income support, and learning English.

Refugees, too, have information needs. Twenty-nine percent of established refugees and 36 percent of newly arrived refugees stated that there were areas where they were not able to get the help they needed.¹⁰² These included English language training, housing and finding work.

Settlement Support New Zealand

The Department of Labour contracts for specific services with local lead agencies that were “nominated by local stakeholders and are either local authorities or NGOs.”¹⁰³ Each lead agency employs a Settlement Support Coordinator (SSC), as the point of contact.

Contracts with local lead agencies established specific requirements for engagement with migrants and refugees and the larger community. The SSNZ local offices have several key responsibilities, including developing local networks for community collaboration on migrant needs, and serving as the “clear point of contact” for newcomers requiring support and information.

Developing networks and fostering community collaboration

Local lead agencies are required to establish a Settlement Network Support Group and a Local Settlement Network. The Settlement Network Support Group is a small group of providers and clients that meet reasonably frequently and are responsible for

¹⁰⁰ *Our Future Together: New Zealand Settlement Strategy* (n.d.), p.11

¹⁰¹ Dunstan (2004b), p.113

¹⁰² Dunstan (2004a), p. 132

¹⁰³ Ho, Elsie S. (August 2007), p.29

identifying existing community services, developing workshops for migrants and refugees and for the mainstream community and identifying gaps or potential duplication in services in the community. A larger group, the Local Settlement Network, which meets more infrequently and includes a wider array of providers and clients, is focused on the development of a local settlement profile and strategic plan.

Under the leadership of the SSNZ coordinator, the local settlement support groups resolve refugee and migrant settlement issues that can be addressed locally and convey to central government those that require national policy changes or action.

Establishing a clear point of contact for migrants and refugees

The SSNZ office is designed to function as an information centre for immigrants and refugees. The local office offers services through face-to-face contact as well as by telephone and webpage. The offices provide general information on services available within the community and refer newcomers to the appropriate agencies for specific assistance.

SSNZ offices are careful to clarify that they provide referrals, not case management assistance. Under a referral system clients are provided with information that they can use to seek the necessary services themselves. A case management approach would require the referring agent to make the contact on behalf of the client and generally follow up with the client and the service provider to determine the outcome of the assistance and identify any additional actions required.

The initial assumption of the programme was that migrants and refugees most needed assistance in the early days of settling in, and that assistance provided in the initial years would foster successful settlement by connecting migrants and refugees to the services that they need. To this end, the programme began by targeting migrants in their first two years after their arrival to the country.

Since quota refugees receive initial assistance through the Department of Labour's contract with RMS Refugee Resettlement, one of the Department's goals was to prevent duplication of services or competition between funded agencies to serve the same population. To achieve this the SSNZ initiatives are not targeted to refugees during their first year in NZ.

SSNZ – a unique opportunity for research

The Settlement Support New Zealand initiative presents a unique opportunity to analyse a new integration programme. There is no tradition or regulatory requirement influencing who uses or does not use the service. As a programme targeted only to migrants, this programme was not designed to appeal to both a native population and newcomers. The local Settlement Support initiative affords an interesting test case for questions regarding refugee access and uptake of voluntary integration assistance.

The goal of this research was to examine the effect of the Settlement Support New Zealand initiative on refugees by studying three elements of the evolving programme. First, the research examined the degree to which local settlement support organisations incorporated the refugee-serving agencies and the specific needs of

refugees into the local strategy. Second, the research looked at whether or not the services provided are accessible to refugees, given their diverse linguistic needs. Third, client data was analysed to determine if refugees are utilising the services available through the SSNZ networks, and if there are identifiable differences in their use when compared to that of other immigrant groups.

Refugee arrival data for the last five years was reviewed to determine which communities received refugees. All SSNZ initiatives were reviewed if the community was or had been a site of primary settlement of quota refugees. This review led to the inclusion of ten local SSNZ initiatives in communities with recent refugee arrivals.

Region	SSNZ Initiative
Auckland	ARMS Auckland
Christchurch	Canterbury Development Corporation
Hamilton	Hamilton Multicultural Services
Hutt Region	Lower Hutt City Council
Manukau	ARMS Manukau
Napier	Napier City Council
Nelson	Nelson City Council
Palmerston North	Ethnic Council of Manawatu
Porirua	Porirua City Council
Wellington	Wellington City Council

Reports to the Department of Labour from each designated SSNZ initiative were analysed. The analysis generated preliminary data on SSNZ governance, participation of refugee-serving organisations, and their identification of issues critical to refugee populations. Subsequent to the report review, structured interviews were conducted with each SSNZ coordinator. In addition, non-identifying, numerical client data from the SSNZ database was obtained for analysis.

SSNZ Governance and Refugees

One of the key roles of the SSNZ initiatives is to develop networks and foster community collaboration. Contracts generally require the local initiative to:

- engage in local settlement planning that reflects local settlement needs, identifies gaps or eliminates duplication in services that support settlement;
- identify ongoing settlement issues, previously identified and not yet (fully) addressed, and steps taken to address these issues; and
- work collaboratively with and develop the Local Settlement Network to identify local settlement needs and issues.¹⁰⁴

Each SSNZ must develop an advisory structure to help in these activities including a Settlement Network Support Group and a Local Settlement Network. To identify refugee needs, refugees and refugee-serving organisations must have a voice in these structures. Gaps that may affect only refugees cannot be identified if refugees or

¹⁰⁴ *Department of Labour Workforce Group and Hamilton Multicultural Services Trust Settlement Services Funding Contract (2007), p.25-35*

entities working closely with them are not involved in the issue identification processes.

Each local SSNZ was asked if refugee-serving organisations, such as RMS Refugee Resettlement, participated in local advisory bodies. In addition SSNZ initiatives were queried as to whether or not ethnic groups with significant numbers of individuals with refugee background or individual refugees routinely participated in the local structures. Table 3 shows the results of these inquiries.

Table 3: Refugees Participation in SSNZ Advisory Groups

SSNZ Initiative	Refugee Serving Organisation Participate in LSN or SNSG	Refugee Ethnic Organisation or Individual Participate in LSM or SNSG
Auckland	Yes	Yes
Christchurch	No	No
Hamilton	Yes	Yes
Hutt	Yes	No
Manukau	Yes	Yes
Napier	No*	Yes
Nelson	Yes	Yes
Palmerston North	No	No
Porirua	Yes	No
Wellington	Yes	No

* Note: Refugees are no longer being resettled in Napier so refugee services agencies have a limited presence.

All but three SSNZ initiatives include refugee-serving agencies in either the SNSG or the LSN. Half indicate that refugee ethnic groups or individuals routinely participate in SNSG or LSN activities. These results demonstrate that most SSNZ initiatives included refugees, or their organisational representatives, in the advisory bodies.

One of the purposes of the advisory bodies of the SSNZ was to identify unmet needs or service gaps in the immigrant community. SSNZ reports were reviewed and coordinators were interviewed to determine if the initiatives identified particular issues as refugee concerns or community concerns about refugees. SSNZ coordinators were also asked if there were any groups in the community working on issues that were focused on refugee concerns. In some areas other coordinating groups were also engaged on issues affecting refugees. Some SSNZ coordinators expressed reluctance to duplicate the work of these other groups.¹⁰⁵ Other coordinators identified specific issues affecting refugees that had been brought to the SSNZ groups by other entities and that SSNZ has then acted upon.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Iris Zhang, SSNZ Coordinator, Canterbury Development Corporation, 8 April 2008

Table 4: Needs Analysis of Refugee Populations

	Demographic Analysis of Refugee Population	Refugee Issues Identified	Other Activities Addressing Refugee and Migrant Issues
Auckland	Ethnic mapping	Youth, Education, Mental Health	Auckland Regional Settlement Strategy
Christchurch	Ethnic mapping	None	Refugee and Migrant Forum, Refugee Council
Hamilton	Completed by other entities.	Personal Safety, Tenancy	Waikato Interagency Ethnic and Migrant Group, Waikato Refugee and New Migrant Advisory Group (WDHB), Hamilton Ethnic Forum, Migrant Employment Group
Hutt	Ethnic mapping	Work and Income, ESOL	Wellington Regional Settlement Strategy, Refugee Health and Well-being Action Plan
Manukau	In Development	Homework centres for refugee youth	Auckland Regional Settlement Strategy
Napier*	Ethnic mapping	Needs Assessment for Somali Women	
Nelson	None	Employment, Fishing Regulations, Racism	Migrant Ethnic Counsel
Palmerston North	Refugee Population Mapping	Transition from RMS to SSNZ	Palmerston North City Council Refugee Support Committee
Porirua	Refugee Population Mapping	Budgeting, Education	Wellington Regional Settlement Strategy, Refugee Health and Well-being Action Plan
Wellington	None	Education	Changemakers, Wellington Regional Settlement Strategy, Refugee Health and Well-being Action Plan

* Note: Napier ceased receiving refugees as a primary resettlement site in 2006.

Local SSNZ initiatives engage in a variety of issues affecting migrants and refugees. SSNZ coordinators may undertake problem-solving for specific populations, which may include issues that primarily affect refugees. For example, Hutt City's SSNZ coordinator organised a meeting with Work and Income managers and English Language Training providers to address conflicts between available course schedules and regulatory requirements for benefits.

Similarly, the Nelson SSNZ coordinator brought together government agencies and refugee groups to provide information and diffuse conflict over fishing regulations. These activities provide a very real opportunity to intervene in developing issues and resolve problems for small populations.

According to SSNZ coordinators, advisory bodies are largely responsive to issues raised by members. Issues coming to the attention of the SSNZ are significantly related to the attendees at the coordinating meetings, making the selection of those individuals even more critical.

It is interesting to note that in most communities there is no apparent relationship between the issues raised as refugee concerns and the reasons that refugees are seeking assistance from the SSNZ information and referral service. This is not necessarily problematic at this point, as there are relatively few refugees seeking assistance from the SSNZ in most communities.

It may be appropriate for local coordinators to begin monitoring requests from disparate migrant groups. These requests might identify either gaps in services to different communities or gaps in information on how they might access services that do exist.

Accessibility of SSNZ to Refugees

SSNZ initiatives have a broad mandate that includes not only the community coordinating functions described above but also the delivery of specific services. Each SSNZ contract requires organising the delivery of a number of workshops, seminars, and orientation programmes to migrants and refugees. The contract also requires access to information and referrals for newcomers through face-to-face, phone, website and printed materials.

Local SSNZ offices have access to an interpreting service via Multi-lingual Information Services. Located in Auckland this service provides information, assistance, support and advocacy in more than 25 languages, including Amharic, Arabic, Burmese, Farsi, Kirundi, Kiswahili, Kurdish and Somali. Individuals seeking assistance through Settlement Support offices may access this service nationwide. Local SSNZ coordinators were asked if they had conducted any analysis of the language needs of local refugee populations, if SSNZ information and referral materials were available in languages other than English, and if workshops were conducted in languages other than English. These interview responses are recorded in Table 5.

Table 5: SSNZ Language Accessibility

	Language Analysis	Orientation and Referral Materials Available in Refugee Languages	Workshops Provided in Refugee Languages
Auckland	No	No. Refugee Line (not materials) in Farsi, Arabic, Burmese, Somali, Amharic.	Yes. Specialised meetings may have translators, such as a recent workshop on education, with Somali, Arabic, Amharic and French translators.
Christchurch	No	No	No
Hamilton	No	Local newsletter is translated in Chinese, Korean, Khmer, Somali and Spanish. Some brochures are in a wide range of languages.	Yes, including Somali and Hindi
Hutt	Yes	No	No
Manukau	No	No	Yes. Orientation with Burmese interpreter.
Napier	No	No	Yes. Somali women's needs assessment.
Nelson	No	No	Yes. Employment programme used former refugees to translate.
Palmerston North	No	No	Yes. Driving skills in Burmese.
Porirua	No	Yes SSNZ brochure in Burmese, Arabic	Yes. Budgeting workshop in Burmese, Election Commission in Arabic
Wellington	No	Not SSNZ Info-pack. Some materials from other agencies are available in different languages.	No

Refugees unable to communicate in English may find it difficult to access assistance through SSNZ offices. Few SSNZ initiatives have conducted an analysis of the language needs of refugee populations. Limited written materials are available in refugee languages, and workshops and orientations rarely offer interpreters.

Accessibility to SSNZ referral information is inconsistent. Most SSNZ coordinators note that they have insufficient budget to develop translated materials or hire interpreters for workshops and orientations. SSNZ offices rely primarily on translated materials from other organisations. Government documents translated into multiple languages often reflect the largest language populations, such as Chinese, Samoan, and Korean. More rarely, resources may be available in a few languages relevant to refugees, such as Arabic and Somali.¹⁰⁶ Few resources are available in languages relevant to some newly arriving populations, such as Burmese and Spanish.

Standard orientation workshops geared to new arrivals, including workshops on “Relating Well in New Zealand” and employment orientation are generally offered only in English. Several SSNZ coordinators commented on the need for additional funding for translation and interpretation. Some rely primarily on informal translators who are neither certified nor compensated. This presents problems not only for refugees but also for other migrants: SSNZ data indicate that only 14 percent of clients were identified as speaking English.

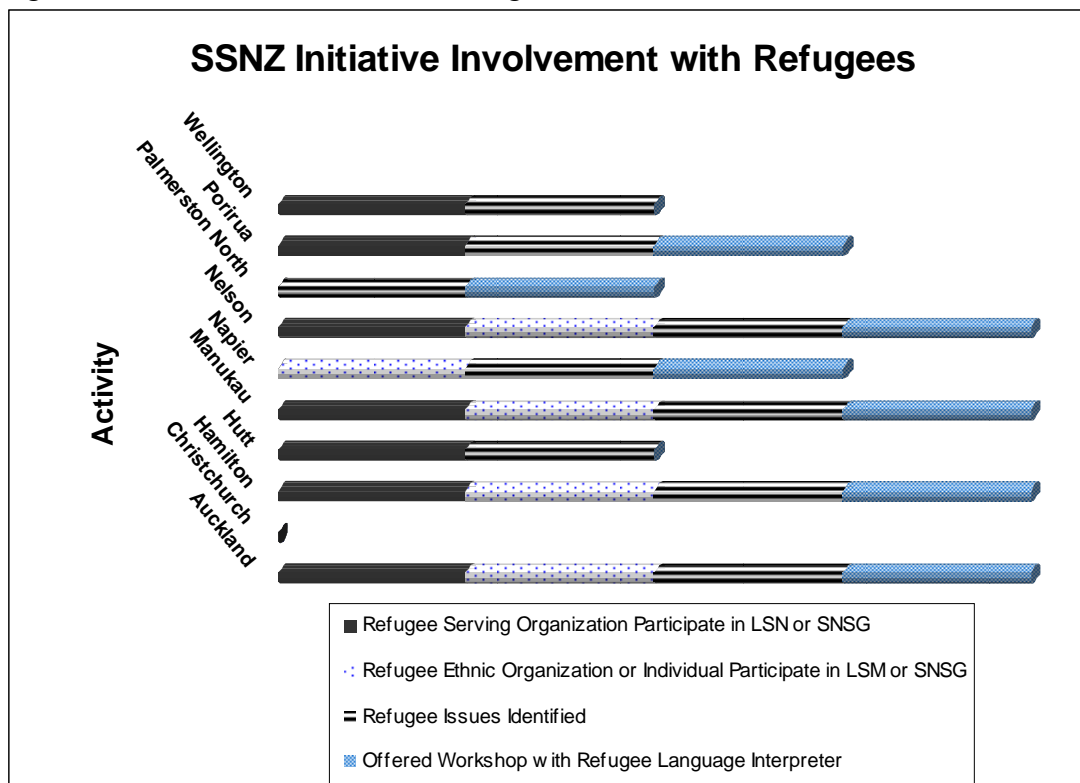
Workshops that do have interpreters for refugee languages tend to be special programmes that are designed to address a specific need, or have emerged through another entity's desire to communicate with refugee groups. Meetings are most likely to be interpreted for refugees when a government agency is seeking to have an issue addressed.

Comparison of SSNZ Involvement with Refugees by Area

Figure 3 shows the comparative involvement of refugees with SSNZ initiatives. Some local organisations, including Auckland, Hamilton, Manukau and Nelson demonstrate particular efforts to include refugees and refugee serving organisations in advisory bodies, identify refugee issues as key concerns, and offer workshops with interpreters for refugee clients. Overall SSNZ initiatives appear to be reaching out to refugee organisations and identifying issues of significance to the population. This identification is turned into action in many cases as SSNZ coordinators seek to address concerns raised and coordinate governmental responses.

¹⁰⁶ *Brochures and WebPages Translated in Other Languages* (n.d.)

Figure 3: SSNZ Involvement with Refugees



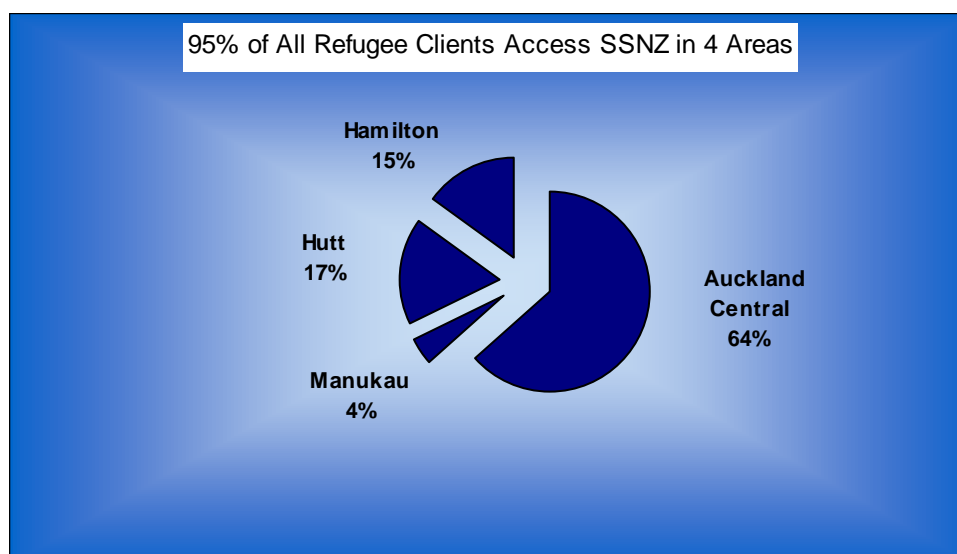
Refugee Utilisation of SSNZ Assistance

The most critical measure of effectiveness of the SSNZ programme on refugees is whether or not the refugees use the services. The Department of Labour maintains an SSNZ client base that provides a tool for this analysis. Client data from SSNZ coordinators was meagre through the early phases of the SSNZ programmes, but all ten of the SSNZ initiatives under study submitted client level data for the first half of the 2007/2008 financial year. The most recent reporting period, from 1 July 2007 until 31 December 2007 was analysed for this research. The data include clients, their immigration status, country of origin, time in NZ, and the reason for requesting assistance.

In total, quota refugees amounted to approximately nine percent of all users of SSNZ services. When family reunification and asylum seekers are included, these humanitarian categories comprise more than 15 percent of total SSNZ clients.

Analysis of the database for the current contract year indicates a startling fact – 95 percent of all quota refugee contacts with an SSNZ initiative occurred in only four communities. As shown in Figure 4, Auckland, Hamilton, Hutt and Manukau SSNZ provided virtually all the services that refugee clients received from SSNZ.

Figure 4: Refugee Utilisation of SSNZ Services in Key Areas



One might expect the largest number of refugee clients to be served by the community that has received the most new refugees. The Auckland region has become the home to the largest number of newly arrived refugees, with more than 1600 over the last five years.¹⁰⁷ The city also ranks as the highest as the location where more refugees have sought assistance from the SSNZ initiative, representing some 67 percent of all refugee clients that have sought assistance from SSNZ.

A number of other factors might influence these results. One consideration must be the availability of assistance through other means. The absence of services in some communities may create demand for assistance from the SSNZ, or, conversely, the availability of services through other avenues in the community may reduce the need for assistance from SSNZ. This could explain the anomalies in Christchurch, where there are several specialised services for refugee clients, including employment and language assistance. Established in 1997, the Refugee and Migrant Centre houses three services: RMS Refugee Resettlement, PEETO, and the ESOL Assessor. This centre provides many of the same information and referral services as SSNZ so it is likely that refugees in need of assistance access those services rather than seek out a new provider.

The SSNZ offices in Auckland, Hamilton, Hutt City and Manukau served the vast majority of all refugees seeking assistance. SSNZ coordinators cited one shared key element that is integral to their success in serving refugees: co-location with other services. ARMS, the provider in Auckland and Manukau, provides on-site assistance in employment, ESOL assessment and the multi-lingual information services. Hamilton's SSNZ is physically located at the Waikato Migrant Resource Centre alongside RMS Refugee Resettlement, Hamilton Interpreting Services, ESOL Home Tutors, and the Waikato Ethnic Council. Similarly, while Hutt City Council, the SSNZ contracted coordinator for the area, is not co-located with other services, it has

¹⁰⁷ Note that refugee arrival data does not distinguish between localities within the Auckland region. For this reason, refugee arrival data and SSNZ utilisation data from Auckland Central and Manukau were combined for this portion of the review.

contracted its client services component through the New Settlers Centre. Co-located at the centre are RMS Refugee Resettlement, ESOL services, and it hosts clinics from such organisations as Housing New Zealand, Work and Income and Refugees as Survivors.

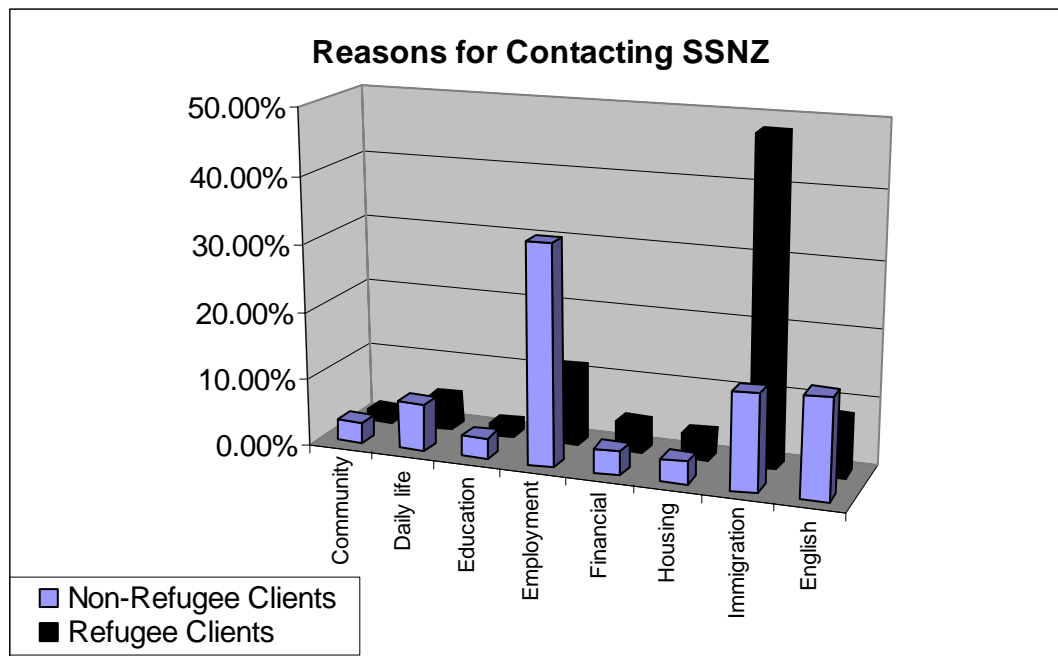
The Palmerston North office is also located within a centre directed towards the needs of migrants; the Ethnic Council of Manawatu. While this organisation provides other services for migrants, it is not co-located with ESOL Home Tutors or RMS Refugee Resettlement as in some of the other regions. In addition, Palmerston North was first chosen as a site for refugee resettlement in 2006, so few refugees have been residing in the community for periods outside the responsibility of RMS Refugee Resettlement.

Differences between refugees and other migrant

Refugees differ from other migrants in their interactions with SSNZ in several areas, the most obvious of which is language. Non-refugee migrants accessing SSNZ services speak Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, and Hindi, whereas most languages spoken by refugees are aggregated into the category of “other” within SSNZ.

Migrants and refugees approach SSNZ for assistance on a variety of matters, from assistance in acquiring employment to domestic issues, but three issues clearly dominate: employment, immigration and learning English. Three concerns account for 62 percent of all contacts made to SSNZ, as Figure 5 demonstrates.

Figure 5: Reasons Refugees and Non-Refugees Contact SSNZ



The primary reason refugees seek support from SSNZ is for immigration issues, more specifically family reunification. The first section of this report detailed some of the difficulties in refugee family reunification; this data merely confirms that refugees are seeking help through various avenues.

The most popular reason for non-refugee migrants and second most popular reason for refugees to contact SSNZ is employment. This finding is consistent with the analysis of services for refugees, which indicated a need for employment support. Many of the workshops offered through SSNZ provide basic advice – how to find employment, preparing a CV to New Zealand requirements, or interview skills. A few provide targeted programmes for professional migrants. In either case, most workshops are presented in English and seek to advise, rather than engage in direct work brokering or placement.

Considerations to Make SSNZ More Accessible and Useful to Refugees

The SSNZ programme clearly meets some of the information needs of refugees. Additional steps could be taken to enhance the SSNZ interaction with refugees and other migrants to make the services provided more efficient and effective.

Ensure priority services are accessible to all

Refugees and migrants are approaching SSNZ for help in three main areas (employment, English language training and immigration), but many SSNZ coordinators are overwhelmed trying to have answers and materials for a wide range of possible requests. While a large bank of information and referral sources are helpful for those few requests, time and energy may be devoted more effectively to first addressing the three priority concerns in a comprehensive fashion. Materials could be developed detailing national programmes (such as Refugee Study Grants) and local provider information, in an easy to understand format, translated into a wide-range of languages, including refugee languages. Currently there is only a limited amount of translated material available, and only in a limited number of languages.

Relationships between the SSNZ coordinators and local providers of priority services should be encouraged and formalised. Providers could serve as an important resource for gauging community need and identifying trends and service gaps. Trends, such as waiting lists for services or drop-out rates, could be reported to the Department of Labour for aggregation and analysis.

Central government might consider a research project to follow up on the results of referrals for priority services to determine the outcomes. The individuals approaching SSNZ represent a key group of individuals in need of services; evaluating the response to those needs would provide valuable information for future decision-making.

Coordinate workshops on priority needs tailored to client requests

Most SSNZ initiatives focus workshops on employment-related activities, but there may be opportunities to improve the match between assistance sought from SSNZ and services offered. The first issue to be confronted is the need to provide services in the languages that the clients speak. Most workshops are offered only in English yet only 14 percent of SSNZ clients speak English.

Additionally, local initiatives could consider programming for a wider range of migrants and refugees. Employment workshops on developing a CV are not useful to a refugee with less than a primary school education and no English skills. Analysis of the clients seeking assistance shows that among individuals approaching SSNZ for employment issues, 87 percent are looking for help in finding a job while less than 10 percent are seeking assistance in preparing a CV or gaining interview skills. Employment workshops introducing job-seekers to providers of employment placement services, or workshops on job training opportunities in the community through different providers may offer access to a greater array of options.

Immigration issues also present opportunities for re-thinking workshop content to meet the needs of individuals seeking assistance. Refugees come to SSNZ for help bringing family into New Zealand. In some cases they need information on eligibility and steps necessary in the process; in other cases they may simply seek a different answer than what they have already received. SSNZ could help to address this need by knowing which agencies have comprehensive information on the options for immigration or working with Community Law Centres to offer clinics. Further, the SSNZ could arrange consultations with Immigration personnel to answer refugee questions.

Consider a transition process for refugees

The Department of Labour has initiated an outreach effort to provide more information on SSNZ to immigrants before they arrive in New Zealand. Outreach for refugees is equally important. Most refugees are deemed by RMS Refugee Resettlement to be ready to live independently less than six months after they arrive in the country. At that point, they may no longer have a social worker from RMS assisting them and may not have on-going contact with volunteers.

A referral process from RMS to SSNZ would provide options for these new arrivals when assistance is needed. RMS has noted that while refugees who are exiting their service will be informed about the services of SSNZ for information and referral, the ones who are best able to take up that offer are those who have a higher level of English. SSNZ is unlikely to have the capacity and the interpreting resources to address the complex needs of refugees still in the early stages of learning English. Since many migrants and refugees have information and referral needs that arise over time, it would seem that a transition to SSNZ might be beneficial for long-term needs.

SSNZ also collects and analyses requests for information and gaps in community services. That analysis should also include refugee needs to ensure the full range of migrant needs are identified. Given the potential for trauma in their history, outreach to refugees may require additional steps to foster trust. RMS local coordinators could assist in developing relationships by providing introductions and referrals to SSNZ through some negotiated process. RMS would benefit from a referral process if refugees who they had determined to be ready for independent living could be referred through SSNZ rather than returning to RMS for assistance.

Emerging Issues for Settlement Support

As the SSNZ initiatives become better established in communities, new issues are emerging related to their role and how they interact with government and their community. Perhaps the most significant issue is how government will address the service gaps that are identified at the local level. Clearly, not all refugee and migrant needs are being met, particularly for employment placement assistance, English language training and immigration.

Local SSNZ initiatives face a challenge when they are approached for assistance and cannot provide adequate referrals, particularly in top priority areas. A transparent process is needed for reporting service needs, ensuring that appropriate government agencies are notified of those needs and reporting back the response from government. Some SSNZ organisations also question how far local settlement networks can go to address needs themselves. The Settlement Division has designed and will soon be implementing a system to track service needs and their resolution, but the limits of local action remain unresolved.

A second issue that is emerging is a demand for SSNZ to provide access to immigrant communities. Presently, these efforts are largely benign and service oriented: for example, the electoral commission sought to inform refugees and migrants of elections and voting requirements. This development appears to have been unanticipated and presents several issues for consideration. One concern is how these requests rank in the priorities of the migrant and refugee population. While these workshops present information that is possibly useful to the target population and help the SSNZ initiative meet its contractual obligations for workshops, it is not clear that they meet the expressed needs of migrants and refugees seeking services.

Another concern is that providing such a forum for other government agencies may inappropriately relieve those agencies of their need to reach out to disparate populations. SSNZ does not serve all refugee and migrant communities, only those who have sought assistance. Governments seeking to access migrants and refugees cannot fulfil their outreach requirements by working through a SSNZ office, although SSNZ could provide an initial entrée to communities that might not otherwise be reached.

The availability of access to refugee and migrant communities through SSNZ may attract attention outside the public sector. There is no evidence that it has occurred, but it is possible that entities other than government could seek to use the SSNZ network to reach out to the refugee and migrant communities. What should be the response if a bank offered to provide financial management seminars to refugees and migrants and offered credit card applications? In the absence of any guidance SSNZ coordinators will have to weigh the benefit to refugees and migrants against the potential of offering a privileged marketing position.

A third emerging issue is how SSNZ organisations interact with the wider community, particularly employers and the business community. Refugees and migrants are not only a constituency in need of assistance, but should be recognised as an asset to the community. Labour shortages provide an opportunity for SSNZ to engage with the business community. A small business owner will probably not rush to attend a

workshop on why migrants are important to New Zealand's economy, but in the current climate that business owner may come to a seminar on recruitment opportunities that happen to focus on local migrant and refugee workforce supply.

6 LESSONS FROM NEW ZEALAND

As global migration grows there is increasing attention to the role of government in the integration of refugees and immigrants. New Zealand's experiences in implementing its National Settlement Strategy offer valuable lessons for other countries contemplating integration programmes. In particular, Settlement Support New Zealand provides opportunities to examine the successes and difficulties associated with implementing initiatives to assist immigrants. An examination of these programmes points to some key considerations to ensure integration support for refugees.

Government leadership can support successful integration

Opinion leaders have a critical role in the development of a community's response to refugees and immigrants. Joint efforts by elected officials and community leaders to communicate the benefits of immigration can lead to a more welcoming environment for newcomers. A clear statement of support from these leaders would be an important first step in promoting acceptance of the host community, and developing the trust of refugee and immigrant communities.

Forward-thinking integration policies recognise that integration is a two-way process, involving both the newcomers and the host community. Efforts to enhance social cohesion need to focus not only on passing on the language and culture of the receiving community to newcomers, but also on educating the host population. Leaders must take on this challenge by setting the tone for the community and discourage divisiveness and group discord. In this context, it is critical that integration efforts not be tied to any one political party or political leader but be seen as a non-partisan, on-going activity for the betterment of the whole society.

New Zealand's Settlement Strategy provides an example of government policies that value immigration and immigrants. The implementation of Settlement Support New Zealand goes further to institutionalise that support, providing an on-going voice for migrants and refugees at multiple levels of government.

Integration is more than language acquisition

Integration programmes can both communicate information and provide opportunities for immigrants and host communities to connect. A comprehensive approach to integration can include the identification of universal rights and responsibilities, access to economic opportunity, health and education, support for language acquisition, pathways to citizenship, responsive mainstream government services and the communication of preferred cultural norms.

Meaningful participation in community life requires access to adequate resources, particularly jobs, education and health care for all members of the community. Refugees in New Zealand approach SSNZ for assistance with immigration and employment and other needs beyond language assistance as they seek to become integrated into the community. A key component of integration efforts should be a comprehensive analysis of services and the identification of gaps in services available to refugees and immigrants.

The identification of services gaps will raise issues of government's response

As gaps in services are identified, governments will have to determine how to respond. This process may raise unresolved issues of the responsibilities of different levels of government. The design of an integration programme should include a process to identify and communicate community concerns to varying levels of government as well as a report back mechanism for responses.

This research has pointed to one of the emerging concerns with the Settlement Support New Zealand programme: the identification of issues at the local level that are not addressed by central government. The identification of a service need creates an expectation that it will be resolved.

It should be recognised that not all gaps are likely to be immediately addressed. Nonetheless, the identification of needed services, the scope of the issue and the cause of the gap can provide important information for the development of policy. New Zealand's experience demonstrates the need for a process to acknowledge the needs that are identified. All levels of government should anticipate increasing pressure to respond to identified needs.

The priorities and limits of integration programmes need to be defined

It is important for integration programmes to define priority targets amid a range of possible criteria, including immigration status, time in country, language, and ethnicity. Determining priority groups is a difficult political step, particularly in communities with populations that are undocumented.

New Zealand's experience shows that there are also difficulties created by the absence of priorities. Local integration efforts either establish their own priorities or simply respond to those who seek services, who may or may not be the most in need of assistance. Some seek to focus on skilled migrants based on a perception that they are most critical to economic growth, others want to focus on those most in need of assistance, including humanitarian admissions. Absent guiding principles, very different programmes will develop in different communities.

It may also be wise to define the limits of integrations efforts. Governments differ on their concept of the role of government, where integration ends and individual or group responsibilities begin. Integration programmes need to identify priority concerns and may wish to establish limits on what is not deemed an appropriate role of government. In particular, defining the line between supporting integration and supporting ethnic communities is a difficult one that may vary widely between nations.

Interpretation and translation need to be addressed comprehensively

Integration services targeted at immigrants will inevitably include a significant number of individuals that don't speak the majority language. Critical documents,

particularly those related to health, safety and employment, as well as referral information, should be available in a wide variety of languages.

Funding for interpretation and translation should be included from the outset as a critical component of integration programmes. The Settlement Support initiative demonstrates the importance of access to interpreters to assist individual clients seeking information, as well as the need for translated information and interpreters for workshops and group activities.

Refugees often arrive in small numbers compared to larger immigrant populations and may be overlooked when language populations are identified strictly by numeric analysis. Special consideration should be given to making information accessible to refugee clients, despite their small numbers.

The effect of integration programmes on existing networks will need to be managed

Many communities have established formal networks to address the needs of refugees or other specific immigrant groups. The development of integration programmes should be managed to include these networks, but not add new responsibilities without funding or support.

The New Zealand experience clearly shows that co-location of services for immigrants with existing services can provide access to immigrant groups that may otherwise be difficult to achieve. It is important to consider priorities among immigrant groups in planning service delivery. Refugees are likely to access assistance through refugee resettlement agencies rather than mainstream organisations. Highly skilled workers and families are likely to have greater access to technology and mainstream services. Agricultural workers often access assistance and have contact with government through schools, community literacy and local health programmes. The use of existing service providers to deliver integration activities may result in prioritisation of immigrant groups to receive those services. Priorities for integration should be established directly, rather than as an inadvertent result of co-locating services.

Integration programmes should be voluntary

An integration programme has many challenges. It must communicate the value of immigration to a public that is sometimes fearful of its impact. It must promote the value of language and social norms to newcomers that may feel their identity threatened or their workload overwhelming. It must balance rights with responsibilities, economics with emotions and the imperatives of change with the desire for complacency.

In the midst of this, it is easy to understand why more nations are seeking to use the power of government to require additional affirmative acts of integration on the part of immigrants. It does, however, seem fundamentally illogical that a welcoming society would seek to foster a sense of social cohesion through coerced participation of one group in government-mandated programmes. Immigrants will seek to acquire the employment, language or social understanding skills that are accessible, relevant

and rewarded by the larger society. Integration initiatives need to foster programmes with these attributes to achieve the desired outcomes, rather than use the power of the state to enforce individual actions. This is particularly true for refugees, who have been persecuted based on who they were or what they thought.

APPENDIX

COMMON BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION POLICY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. Integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States.

Integration is a dynamic, long-term, and continuous two-way process of mutual accommodation, not a static outcome. It demands the participation not only of immigrants and their descendants but of every resident. The integration process involves adaptation by immigrants, both men and women, who all have rights and responsibilities in relation to their new country of residence. It also involves the receiving society, which should create the opportunities for the immigrants' full economic, social, cultural, and political participation. Accordingly, Member States are encouraged to consider and involve both immigrants and national citizens in integration policy, and to communicate clearly their mutual rights and responsibilities.

2. Integration implies respect for the basic values of the European Union. Everybody resident in the EU must adapt and adhere closely to the basic values of the European Union as well as to Member State laws.

The provisions and values enshrined in European Treaties serve as both baseline and compass, as they are common to the Member States. They include respect for the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law. Furthermore they include respect for the provisions of the Charter of fundamental rights of the Union, which enshrine the concepts of dignity, freedom, equality and non-discrimination, solidarity, citizen's rights, and justice. Member States are responsible for actively assuring that all residents, including immigrants, understand, respect, benefit from, and are protected on an equal basis by the full scope of values, rights, responsibilities, and privileges established by the EU and Member State laws. Views and opinions that are not compatible with such basic values might hinder the successful integration of immigrants into their new host society and might adversely influence the society as a whole. Consequently successful integration policies and practices preventing isolation of certain groups are a way to enhance the fulfilment of respect for common European and national values.

3. Employment is a key part of the integration process and is central to the participation of immigrants, to the contributions immigrants make to the host society, and to making such contributions visible.

Employment is an important way for immigrants to make a visible contribution to Member State societies and to participate in the host society. At the workplace integration of immigrants can be promoted by the recognition of qualifications acquired in another country, by training opportunities that provide skills demanded at the workplace and policies and programmes that facilitate access to jobs and the transition to work. It is also important that there are sufficient incentives and opportunities for immigrants, in particular for those with the prospect of remaining, to seek and obtain employment.

The targeting of measures to support immigrants in the European Employment Strategy is an indication of the important influence of employment on the integration process. It is important to make greater use of the European Employment Strategy and the European Social Inclusion Process, backed up by the European Social Fund (ESF), including the

lessons learnt from the Equal Community Initiative to reach the Lisbon targets and to promote the combat against all forms of discrimination at the workplace. It is important that Member States, in cooperation with the social partners, pay particular attention to and undertake effective action against discrimination in the recruitment policies of employers on the grounds of ethnic origin of the candidates.

4. Basic knowledge of the host society's language, history, and institutions is indispensable to integration; enabling immigrants to acquire this basic knowledge is essential to successful integration.

The importance of basic linguistic, historical, and civic knowledge is reflected in the increasing emphasis placed by several Member States on introductory programmes that focus on putting together the most appropriate toolkit to start the integration process. Pursuing such programmes will allow immigrants to quickly find a place in the key domains of work, housing, education, and health, and help start the longer-term process of normative adaptation to the new society. At the same time, such programmes become strategic investments in the economic and social well-being of society as a whole. Acquiring the language and culture of the host society should be an important focus. Full respect for the immigrants' and their descendants' own language and culture should be also an important element of integration policy.

5. Efforts in education are critical to preparing immigrants, and particularly their descendants, to be more successful and more active participants in society.

Education is an important way to prepare people to participate in society, especially for newcomers. However, lifelong learning and employability are not the only benefits of education. Transferring knowledge about the role and working of societal institutions and regulations and transmitting the norms and values that form the binding element in the functioning of society are also a crucial goal of the educational system. Education prepares people to participate better in all areas of daily life and to interact with others. Consequently, education not only has positive effects for the individual, but also for the society as a whole.

Educational arrears are easily transmitted from one generation to the next. Therefore, it is essential that special attention is given to the educational achievement of those who face difficulties within the school system. Given the critical role played by education in the integration of those who are new in a society – and especially for women and children – scholastic underachievement, early school-leaving and of all forms of migrant youth delinquency should be avoided and made priority areas for policy intervention.

6. Access for immigrants to institutions, as well as to public and private goods and services, on a basis equal to national citizens and in a non-discriminatory way is a critical foundation for better integration.

If immigrants are to be allowed to participate fully within the host society, they must be treated equally and fairly and be protected from discrimination. EU law prohibits discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin in employment, education, social security, healthcare, access to goods and services, and housing. Consequently, transparent rules, clearly articulated expectations and predictable benefits for law-abiding immigrants are prerequisites to better immigration and integration policies.

Any legal exceptions to this accessibility must be legitimate and transparent. Access also implies taking active steps to ensure that public institutions, policies, housing, and services, wherever possible, are open to immigrants. These steps need to be in accordance

with the implementation of the Council Directive concerning the status of third-country nationals who are long-term residents. It is important to monitor and evaluate the success of public institutions in serving immigrants, and that adjustments are being made on an ongoing basis.

Conversely, uncertainty and unequal treatment breed disrespect for the rules and can marginalise immigrants and their families, socially and economically. The adverse implications of such marginalisation continue to be seen across generations. Restrictions on the rights and privileges of non-nationals should be transparent and be made only after consideration of the integration consequences, particularly on the descendants of immigrants. Finally, the prospect of acquiring Member State citizenship can be an important incentive for integration.

7. Frequent interaction between immigrants and Member State citizens is a fundamental mechanism for integration. Shared forums, inter-cultural dialogue, education about immigrants and immigrant cultures, and stimulating living conditions in urban environments enhance the interactions between immigrants and Member State citizens.

Integration is a process that takes place primarily at the local level. The frequency and quality of private interactions and exchanges between immigrants and other residents are key elements of greater integration. There are many ways to encourage interaction. An important aspect is a greater focus on promoting the use of common forums, intercultural dialogue, spaces, and activities in which immigrants interact with other people in the host society, and on the sustained education of the host society about immigrants and immigrant cultures. Good cooperation among the different involved actors is necessary in order to stimulate these processes. Furthermore, implementation of active anti-discrimination policies, anti-racism policies, and awareness-raising activities to promote the positive aspects of a diverse society are important in this regard.

The level of economic welfare in neighbourhoods, the feeling of safety, the condition of public spaces, and the existence of stimulating havens for immigrant children and youngsters and other living conditions are all aspects that affect the image of the people who live in these areas. In many Member States, immigrant population groups are often concentrated in poor urban areas. This does not contribute to a positive integration process.

Positive interaction between immigrants and the host society and the stimulation of this interaction contribute to successful integration and are therefore needed. Therefore, improving the living environment in terms of decent housing, good health care, neighbourhood safety, and the availability of opportunities for education, voluntary work and job training is also necessary.

8. The practice of diverse cultures and religions is guaranteed under the Charter of Fundamental Rights and must be safeguarded, unless practices conflict with other inviolable European rights or with national law.

The cultures and religions that immigrants bring with them can facilitate greater understanding among people, ease the transition of immigrants into the new society and can enrich societies. Furthermore, the freedom to practice one's religion and culture is guaranteed under the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Member States have an obligation to safeguard these rights. Furthermore, EU law prohibits discrimination in employment or occupation on the grounds of religion or belief.

However, Member States also have a responsibility to ensure that cultural and religious practices do not prevent individual migrants from exercising other fundamental rights or from participating in the host society. This is particularly important as it pertains to the rights and equality of women, the rights and interests of children, and the freedom to practice or not to practice a particular religion. Constructive social, inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue, education, thoughtful public discourse, support for cultural and religious expressions that respect national and European values, rights and laws (as opposed to expressions that violate both the letter and spirit of such values and rights), and other non-coercive measures are the preferred way of addressing issues relating to unacceptable cultural and religious practices that clash with fundamental rights. However if necessary according to the law legal coercive measures can also be needed.

9. The participation of immigrants in the democratic process and in the formulation of integration policies and measures, especially at the local level, supports their integration.

Allowing immigrants a voice in the formulation of policies that directly affect them may result in policy that better serves immigrants and enhances their sense of belonging. Wherever possible, immigrants should become involved in all facets of the democratic process. Ways of stimulating this participation and generating mutual understanding could be reached by structured dialogue between immigrant groups and governments. Wherever possible, immigrants could even be involved in elections, the right to vote and joining political parties. When unequal forms of membership and levels of engagement persist for longer than is either reasonable or necessary, divisions or differences can become deeply rooted. This requires urgent attention by all Member States.

10. Mainstreaming integration policies and measures in all relevant policy portfolios and levels of government and public services is an important consideration in public policy formation and implementation.

The integration of immigrants is deeply influenced by a broad array of policies that cut across institutional competencies and levels of government. In this context particularly consideration needs to be given to the impact of immigration on public services like education, social services and others, especially at the level of regional and local administrations, in order to avoid a decrease in the quality standards of these services. Accordingly, not only within Member States but also at the European level, steps are needed to ensure that the focus on integration is a mainstream consideration in policy formulation and implementation, while at the same time specifically targeted policies for integrating migrants are being developed.

Although Governments and public institutions at all levels are important actors, they are not the only ones. Integration occurs in all spheres of public and private life. Numerous non-governmental actors influence the integration process of immigrants and can have an additional value. Examples in this respect are trade unions, businesses, employer organisations, political parties, the media, sports clubs and cultural, social and religious organisations. Cooperation, coordination and communication between all of these actors are important for effective integration policy. The involvement of both immigrant and the other people in the host society is also necessary.

11. Developing clear goals, indicators and evaluation mechanisms are necessary to adjust policy, evaluate progress on integration and to make the exchange of information more effective.

Irrespective of the level of integration policy efforts, it is important to know whether these efforts are effective and make progress. Although it is a process rather than an outcome, integration can be measured and policies evaluated. Sets of integration indicators, goals, evaluation mechanisms and benchmarking can assist measuring and comparing progress, monitor trends and developments. The purpose of such evaluation is to learn from experience, a way to avoid possible failures of the past, adjust policy accordingly and showing interest for each others efforts.

When Member States share information about their evaluative tools at European level and, where appropriate, develop European criteria (indicators, benchmarks) and gauges for the purposes of comparative learning, the process of knowledge-sharing will be made more effective. The exchange of information has already proven to be useful within the National Contact Points on integration. Exchanging information provides for taking into account the different phases in which Member States find themselves in the development of their own integration policies and strategies."

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