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I ōrea te tuātara ka patu ki waho:
**Competing Priorities in the New Zealand
Refugee Resettlement Strategy**

Prepared by
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With funding from the sponsors of the
Ian Axford (New Zealand) Fellowships in Public Policy

August 2014

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Published by Fulbright New Zealand, August 2014

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ISBN 978-1-877502-52-1 (print)

ISBN 978-1-877502-53-8 (PDF)

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We acknowledge and thank the following sponsors that support the Ian Axford (New Zealand) Fellowships in Public Policy programme:

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- New Zealand Customs Service
- State Services Commission
- The Treasury
- Victoria University of Wellington School of Government

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

He aha te mea nui o te Ao? He tangata, he tangata, he tangata.

The Māori are wise to say that people are of great importance in the world, even though it is the land that is permanent, or *toitū he whenua, whatungarongaro he tāngata*. The land of New Zealand is among the most beautiful on earth, and during my time here, I have had the privilege to see so much of it – from the magnificent Milford Sound, the Southern Alps and glaciers, Otago Peninsula, and Hokitika Gorge to the glow worm caves of Waikato, geothermal Rotorua, the Coromandel Peninsula, and black sand beaches of the west. I have kayaked Tasman Bay, white water rafted the Kaituna River and its seven metre waterfall, and leapt from Coronet Peak (attached to a paraglider, of course!). These sights and adventures will live on in my mind always, though I must leave its shores.

But the people of Aotearoa will live on in my heart, as will 1/230 The Terrace, where my husband and I resided during our residency in Wellington and 56 The Terrace, Unisys House, Level 7, where I worked with colleagues in the refugee group of Immigration New Zealand. I made many friends during my months at the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. My thanks for the greetings and conversations that awaited me each morning from Steve, Sela, Atul, Anna, Anne-Marie, Yuki, Greg, Johnny, Lucy, and Angie. Appreciation to those who invited my husband Dick and me on outings – Judi, Suzanne and Mark, and Alison. Thanks also, to Andrew in the Auckland office for helping me on my visits north.

The Ministry of Education, and especially its Regional Refugee and Migrant Education Coordinators, provided much needed guidance and assistance as I explored the MOE education goals for the new Strategy and its several provisions to help refugee-background students and adults. My thanks to Susan Gamble for the initial introductions and to Hassan, Adele, Afat, and Abdi for their interviews and for all they did to help me gain entrance to schools, teachers, and refugee agencies in their regions. And to those teachers and students and staff, too numerous to name individually, it has been a privilege to meet and learn from you all.

The Fulbright staff in Wellington have been a joy to know since the beginning of this journey, starting with the writing of my application in February 2013. The US Coordinator for the Ian Axford Fellowships, Frank Cain, provided me excellent guidance in understanding the intent of the award to help me write a winning application. The selection committee members in Washington, DC, were friendly and put me at ease during the interview process. My thanks to Mele Wendt, the Executive Director at Fulbright New Zealand, for her kind assistance and devoted attention to both New Zealand Fulbright and Ian Axford scholars; and to Andy and Val at the Fulbright office for all their efforts to assist. Thanks for letting me cart my laptop to your office with some frequency to Skype colleagues in the US during work hours! And, of course, special gratitude to Stefanie Joe, not only for her warmth and generosity, but also for her expert handling of all aspects of the Axford fellowship.

More appreciation goes to my university mentors – Kate McMullen at Victoria University of Wellington, and Susan Martin at Georgetown University in DC, for their expert edits and recommendations to my report. Thanks, too, to my home institution, the University of South Florida at Sarasota-Manatee, for granting me a paid semester of sabbatical from my regular duties, and to my colleagues there for

filling in for me. I know I will come back with a new wealth of knowledge that I hope makes a difference in our college and on campus.

My wonderful husband, Dick, how can I thank you for abandoning your bike club and political action to jump on a plane and travel 16 hours ahead in time to share this opportunity with me? You are so generous and giving, and I love you. My son Brendan, you made it possible for me to leave home knowing that you would take care of our home and my beloved cat, Aura! I felt comfortable to go away leaving the place in your competent hands. Mom, too, thanks for all your help. And Kathy and Gary, thanks for watching Pippin; Sam and SMART, for taking care of Magic. Thanks to those who visited and brought a bit of home with them: daughter Kat and her husband Bryan, Brendan, Mom, Phil, Roseanne, and Jim. And to fellow 2014 Axfords Rosemary and Ben for staying in touch through the months spent in Wellington.

The last is not the least here; rather, it is more of saving the best for last. To Judi Altinkaya, my mentor at the MBIE. You are such a gracious and generous spirit. From meeting us during our early arrival in Wellington, letting us store all our extra bags while we travelled in the South Island, collecting us at the airport and letting us stay in your home, bringing us (and all that stuff!) to our new flat, driving us to stores to help us set up our place, inviting us to dinner, inviting us to your birthday celebration, joining us for concerts and plays, welcoming me to the MBIE, providing me with so many important contacts, helping with all my research travel, editing my report, and on and on and on. You are simply wonderful! I cannot imagine as fabulous a stay in New Zealand without your tireless efforts to be welcoming. You are a true friend.

Jody Lynn McBrien
Wellington, August 2014

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

New Zealand was among the first countries to resettle refugees at the time of the Second World War. The nation is a signatory to the 1951 Convention Related to the Status of Refugees, and its 1967 Protocol; and it established systematic practices for resettlement with its 1986 Immigration Policy Review and Immigration Act of 1987. It has been cited by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees as an international model for refugee resettlement.

In the early part of the twenty-first century, New Zealand recognised the need to create a refugee-specific policy based on the needs of ongoing resettlement. The Department of Labour sponsored research that sought the voices of refugee-background residents resettled in New Zealand for up to 10 years, publishing the documents *Refugee Voices*, *New Land*, *New Life*, and others, as well as two thorough literature reviews; and the Ministry of Education (MOE) sponsored research on educational interventions for refugee-background students. In 2010, the Government charged the Department of Labour to create a resettlement strategy, which was completed by the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment (MBIE) after the government restructuring, and signed by the Cabinet in late 2012.

The New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy promotes an “end-to-end process” that begins with pre-arrival and ends with integration into New Zealand society. It emphasises employment with additional goals of social participation, health and wellbeing, education, and safe housing. The new policies are being rolled out in steps. In 2014, Phase Two of implementation, the emphasis has been on offshore processing and the reception stage, or the first six weeks that quota refugees spend at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre (MRRC). For the pre-arrival period, selected refugees are receiving more information about New Zealand with the intention of providing realistic information about living and working there. At MRRC, the adult curriculum has been overhauled to provide over 50 additional hours devoted to employment-related topics and plans. Immigration New Zealand is also attempting to reduce interruptions to refugee newcomer classes by other agencies conducting their health screenings, interviews, and assessments. For the initial community settlement stage, the MBIE has contracted with the New Zealand Red Cross to provide initial support to refugee-background residents.

To critique this new policy, I interviewed policymakers and other staff working at the MBIE and the MOE regarding the Strategy creation and implementation. I also interviewed NGO agency staff, teachers, and refugee-background students from five of the six resettlement regions to learn their views about the new Strategy and goals. There was overwhelming support for creation of a policy and for each of the goals. However, there were competing beliefs about the emphasis on employment and the timing of that emphasis (immediately upon arrival). Some interviewees were also concerned that most new supports are exclusive of convention refugees and those coming on family reunification plans. Regarding education goals, most teachers I interviewed who work with refugee-background students believe that the new goal – 85 per cent of 18-year old refugee-background students who had studied in New Zealand for at least five years should reach NCEA Level 2 or its equivalent – is honourable but not practical. Using widely accepted research indicating that it takes new language learners a minimum of five years to reach an academic understanding of the language, they stated that many resettled refugee students begin school at pre-literacy levels in their own languages and with psychological issues related to trauma,

so it is likely to take more than five years to reach NCEA Level 2. For adults, there remain challenges around attendance at English language classes and receiving sufficient hours in language instruction. The MBIE is currently working with the TEC and others to determine appropriate adult ESOL assessments and provision of tuition.

Based on my own field work as well as an extensive review of past research, I conclude that the five goals are key components in successful resettlement. However, I recommend that meaningful employment, whether it be low- or high-skilled, is more likely if the goals of health and wellbeing and education/English language are given priority, at least in the first months through initial year or two of resettlement. The average refugee journey is fraught with years of uncertainty, fear, and multiple incidents of trauma. Such complications can cause both physical and psychological illness requiring long-term treatment that should usually proceed job-seeking.

The biggest challenges most refugee-background job-seekers face are insufficient English language, skills, and New Zealand work experience. These deficits prevent them from getting jobs, and they prevent them from advancing if they begin at entry-level positions. Pressure to find work in advance of an initial time to settle and gain skills can create excess stress on lives already overburdened with trauma and loss. Sometimes English learning can be successfully made a part of a work programme, but it requires commitment from the employer. Employment is a key element in successful resettlement for most refugees, and there are a percentage of refugee-background adults who are able and willing to begin employment in the first months of resettlement. Flexibility is required to recognise the larger number who have pressing needs prior to a stress on employment.

Ministry employees and managers express confidence in the new emphasis, and some have indicated that the former lack of such a strategy has caused resettled refugees to become dependent on government benefits rather than to seek paid work. Some reference the high numbers of unemployed former refugees to make their point. The statistics, however, do not explain *why* refugee-background adults are unemployed. The government's own research, along with that of scholars and this particular field study, offer other reasons, beginning with lack of English ability. Other core reasons are challenges brought on by the employers themselves who want to hire people with New Zealand job experience and who prefer to hire New Zealand-born employees. The other top outcome, participation in New Zealand society, faces a similar challenge of discomfort by longstanding residents. Social participation is a two-way street, and newcomers must feel welcomed by New Zealanders to participate. New Zealand, as a nation that campaigns to attract migrants, is more prepared to be welcoming than a society such as the United States, which limits migration. To help those who remain concerned about refugee resettlement, however, I suggest a programme currently helping US residents overcome their biases.

The United States is used as a point of comparison because it has always stressed employment above other resettlement expectations, with far less flexibility than New Zealand. The pressure of finding employment quickly and the threat of losing minimum financial aid is very stressful for former refugees in the United States.

The report concludes with eight recommendations: improving communication between ministries and refugee agency experts, re-prioritising the goals, including convention and family reunification refugees, maintaining flexibility, including children and youth, simplifying applications, improving access to employment, and preparing communities to welcome refugees.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ARCC	Auckland Refugee Community Coalition
AUT	Auckland University of Technology
ELL	English language learning
ELLP	English Language Learning Progressions
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
GNI	Gross National Income
ICRIRR	International Conference on the Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INZ	Immigration New Zealand
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army, a militia group led by Joseph Kony
MBIE	New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
MOE	New Zealand Ministry of Education
NCEA	New Zealand National Certificate of Educational Achievement
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ORR	United States Office of Refugee Resettlement
PRM	United States Bureau of Populations, Refugees, and Migration
R & P	United States Reception and Placement Program
RFS	Refugee Family Services of Atlanta, Georgia
RFSC	New Zealand Refugee Family Support Category
RQB	New Zealand Refugee Quota Branch
SSNZ	Settlement Support New Zealand
Strategy	New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy (2012)
TEC	Tertiary Education Commission
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees
USRAP	United States Refugee Admission Program
WINZ	Work and Income New Zealand

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INTRODUCTION

*Refugees generally have a high level of motivation not only to rebuild their own lives but also to make a meaningful contribution to the receiving society. The fact that they have survived often horrific experiences is testimony to their resilience.*¹

Both New Zealand and the United States have a proud heritage of international humanitarian response. The two countries allocate a portion of their national budgets to humanitarian aid in response to world disasters and socio-political disruption. In 2012, United States assistance totalled at US\$38 billion (0.02 per cent of the country's gross national income), and New Zealand contributed 0.01 per cent of its GNI, or \$40 million.² A portion of both countries' aid funds are allocated to helping resettle refugees who are not able to return to their home country and cannot be integrated into their country of first refuge.

The "refugee journey", especially in the case of war or violent political disruption, is typically comprised of several events which must be considered when formulating resettlement policies. In the pre-flight stage, the nation, or portion of a nation, becomes unstable, and security breaks down. There may be incidents of killings, abductions, rapes, and/or torture by militia groups, the government, or both. Fear is widespread. As tensions escalate, sometimes resulting in war, citizens may be placed into camps within the country (internally displaced people's – IDP – camps), as they were in northern Uganda in the years of war with Joseph Kony and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). This period is the "flight" phase of the journey. Residents may seek their own places to hide within their country (also as IDPs), or they may flee over the national border seeking protection. Those fleeing over their country's borders are defined as refugees. Although IDPs are also at great risk, they are still subject to the government of their own country. Refugees seek the protection of another country, and they may reach refugee camps created and managed by a government, the United Nations, or a non-governmental organisation (NGO); or they may be scattered throughout towns and cities in the country of refuge. Though some refugee camps have existed for decades, they are usually quickly constructed to meet an emergency demand. Food, shelter, healthcare, education, and safety are often inadequate, leading to problems with infections, disease, and violence. After trauma associated with the pre-flight phase, refugees often experience additional stress and trauma in flight. Additionally, their experiences tend to make them fearful or distrustful of people in official capacities, such as police, defence patrols, and administrators.

After the flight stage, there are three possibilities the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) considers durable solutions. The ideal is for the situation in the home nation to improve and be safe such that refugees can repatriate to their own country. If that opportunity does not occur, the second solution is integration in the country to which the refugees fled. Both of these solutions have occurred in the case of Liberian refugees who fled to Ghana, for example. If neither of these solutions is possible, the third solution is permanent resettlement into a third

¹ UNHCR, *Refugee Resettlement* (2002), Part 1.1, p. 7

² *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report* (2013)

country, the situation of those refugee-background³ residents who now call New Zealand, the United States, or one of 25 other resettlement countries their home. However, given the number of nations involved with resettlement and the annual quotas each country agrees to, this possibility is available to less than one per cent of the world's refugees.

In 2012, 46 per cent of world refugees were under the age of 18.⁴ The state of education in post-flight and flight stages of the refugee journey is sporadic and often politically affected by the host governments or NGOs that manage the curriculum. Refugees may not know the language of instruction. Classes are often overcrowded, and needed materials are not available. In many situations, children are unable to go to school at all. They may experience years of interruption in their education. Or they may have never been to school in their homeland. In addition to the lack of access to a proper education, large numbers of refugee children have experienced multiple instances of trauma – war, abduction, rape, loss of family members, witnessing killings, and more – that result in physical and emotional stress. Many studies have demonstrated correlation between wellbeing and educational success.^{5,6}

Because of these disparate conditions, refugee-background children who are resettled into a third country present with a wide range of needs. Still, children are more likely than their refugee-background parents to be educated in their new country of residence, allowing them far greater opportunities to contribute, through their education, employment, and finances, to the growth and development of the country. To achieve this result, coordination between numerous institutions composed of well trained and caring staff are important for their rehabilitation and academic success. There are many examples of refugee-background youth who overcome the trauma of their childhood to become highly productive and respected members of their new countries. However, too many fall into poverty and even criminal activity if they do not receive the initial support that they need.

Although children and youth are often the reason that refugee parents hope for third-country resettlement, the adults must also acquire some education – at the very least, a basic knowledge of the new country's culture and language – if they are to obtain and sustain employment. Adults may have faced worse experiences than their children and so must process their own grief and trauma. They may arrive from countries that are poor and primarily agrarian, so they may have little experience with jobs typical in a developed country. Their educational backgrounds from their homelands – and perhaps from the first country of refuge – will also range from a quality education to no formal education. Language acquisition is far easier for young children than for adults, and people illiterate in their native language struggle the most.⁷ In migrant

³ An Auckland manager of a refugee services agency, originally from South Sudan, told me, "People have the wrong impression and they create negative stereotypes. I tell my community and I tell employers, 'Once we arrive in New Zealand, we are permanent residents. We are new Kiwis! We are no longer refugees. We have a new country. We have a refugee background, but we must not think of ourselves as refugees anymore. Now we are free, and we have choices.'" I have always believed in the power of language to shape thoughts. Out of respect for his wisdom, I will use "refugee background" or "former refugees" when referring to those who are resettled, or occasionally "resettled refugees." The latter is not as precise but will allow for some flexibility in writing style.

⁴ UNHCR Global Trends Report (2012)

⁵ Escueta *et al.* (2014)

⁶ Park *et al.* (2011)

⁷ Benseman (2012)

situations, people typically gain an informal conversational ability with a language years before they can acquire an academic level of the new language.

Based on research conducted by the government in the beginning of this century, New Zealand has recognised the need for a new strategy to help refugee-background residents become independent and engaged members of the society. Research conducted by the Department of Labour⁸ indicated that only 29 per cent of resettled refugees in New Zealand were employed after five years. Even at the 10 year mark, 42 per cent had work for wages at the time of the survey (a majority were male), and 43 per cent had done unpaid work (a majority were female). The average personal income was \$300/week less than the average income of New Zealand-born residents.⁹

Almost half expressed difficulties making friends outside their ethnic group, largely because of their poor language skills. Fewer than half of Year 11-13 refugee-background students studying in New Zealand schools for at least five years were achieving the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) Level 2, the lowest level to equip them for attending a tertiary vocational school. As a result, the New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy (the Strategy) of 2012 prioritises self-sufficiency (emphasising employment) and participation in society, with interconnected goals of health and wellbeing, education, and housing. Implementation began in 2014, with an emphasis on better offshore information about New Zealand and a greatly changed curriculum offered at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre (MRRC), where quota refugees receive six weeks of orientation to New Zealand. Prior to the new Strategy, Centre for Refugee Education faculty from the Auckland University of Technology (AUT) emphasised a welcoming process for the MRRC curriculum, familiarising the participants with aspects of New Zealand culture, teaching English, and explaining benefits. The previous curriculum devoted approximately three hours to a discussion of careers. The new curriculum has been changed to provide approximately 55 hours of time to emphasising employment.

The New Zealand government's desired outcomes of the Strategy are for "all working age refugees [to be] in paid work or supported by a family member in paid work" in the self-sufficiency category.¹⁰ In the participation category, the stated goal is that "refugees actively participate in New Zealand life and have a strong sense of belonging to New Zealand".¹¹ Education outcomes for former refugee adults emphasise English language skills; for refugee-background children, the goal is that 85 per cent of 18-year olds achieve NCEA Level 2 or higher if they have studied in New Zealand schools for at least five years. This goal for refugee-background students is equal to that for all New Zealand students.

A focus of this report is to analyse new policy priorities in a comparative and international context. When the New Zealand Government began research with its resettled refugees, the country had recently participated in the International Conference on the Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees (ICRIRR) that took place in Sweden in April 2001. The intent was to provide a forum at which both traditional and new resettlement countries could discuss their policies and learn about

⁸ Department of Labour (2004), *Refugee Voices*, p. 26.

⁹ Searle *et al.* (2012)

¹⁰ Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment, *The New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy* (2012), p. 2

¹¹ *Ibid.*

best practices. New Zealand had two representatives on the Executive Committee Steering Group. A major outcome from the conference was a handbook co-published by UNHCR and the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture, *Refugee Resettlement: An International Handbook to Guide Reception and Integration*, for use by established and emerging resettlement countries. The UNHCR publication emphasises the initial needs of restoring resettled refugees' sense of "security, control and social and economic independence by meeting basic needs, facilitating communication and fostering the understanding of the receiving community".¹² Chapter Two of the handbook describes the initial period of arrival as unsettling. Resettled refugees must cope with a new environment, government, language, housing and appliances, food and shopping, currency, banking, and much more as they are processing their own grief and departure from friends and family members. They may require physical and mental health assistance. Through this highly stressful time, welcoming and supportive staff are vital to the newcomers' sense of safety and belonging.

The New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy clearly takes these elements to heart, and diagrams of the new reception programme demonstrate planned outcomes of self-sufficiency, social participation, health and wellbeing, education, and housing. It is the prioritising of these elements, however, that is cause for concern by many non-governmental participants to whom I spoke; specifically, the prioritising of employment and the meaning of the phrase "as soon as possible". All stakeholders in the New Zealand resettlement process agree that most refugee-background residents ought to become employed. Concurrently, most former refugees state the desire for self-sufficiency through earning their own wages.¹³ Not all agree, however, that employment should be stressed from the first days and weeks of resettlement as it is in the implementation of the new Strategy. A viable alternative is to re-prioritise the goals such that health and education come first, followed by self-sufficiency, participation and housing. An argument for reorganising priorities will be a focus of this analysis.

An appropriate comparison is with the United States, as it has emphasised employment from the beginnings of its formal refugee resettlement laws and policies. Numerous US programmes for refugee-background employment boast figures of 60-80 per cent employment rates. However, the average hourly wage of US\$8.00-9.00 reported by these programs would place a family of three at the poverty level^{14,15}, and refugee families are typically larger than three. The 2011 Annual Survey of Refugees provided to the US Congress by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) indicated that 52 per cent of resettled refugees aged 16 or over were employed in 2011, and 58 per cent of sampled households were entirely self-sufficient.¹⁶ This report will examine contexts of the employment and self-sufficiency.

Beginning with a comparison of national-level policies that provide for refugee resettlement in general, the bulk of the report will examine the two countries' policies

¹² UNHCR (2002), *Refugee Resettlement*, ch. 2, p. 68

¹³ Those excluded would be those who are unable to work either through physical/mental disabilities or age.

¹⁴ Figures from Halpern, Peggy (2008)

¹⁵ US Department of Health and Human Services, 2013 Poverty Guidelines

¹⁶ US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement, Report to the Congress FY 2011, p. iii.

and procedures for reaching stated goals for resettled refugees, with an emphasis on wellbeing, education, and employment. Contents of the report are as follows: 1) a brief history of laws and policies affecting each country's practices, along with a socio-historical view of attitudes towards newcomers; 2) an examination of competing priorities in the new Strategy, 3) an argument for re-prioritising goals with respect to health and education, 4) thoughts on increasing social participation, and finally 5) conclusions and recommendations. This final section will also offer suggestions for ways in which New Zealand and the United States might work together to provide ever-better methods of successful resettlement of refugees into their respective nations.

As the Māori title of this report states, problems are solved by continuing to find solutions. New Zealand is known for the excellent work it does in resettlement and in its research to improve services. As an outsider aware of the problems in a nation that has always made employment its primary goal, I suggest a more delicate balance among competing priorities. Overarching goals in democracies are to have the residents be loyal to the country in which they live and to engage in contributing to the advancement of that nation. Is the best strategy to emphasise employment, any employment, over education, given that education leads to better employment opportunities and that people engaged in work that raises them above the lowest levels of income are most likely to be satisfied, contributing members of society? The question will guide the analysis of findings presented.

This report will also demonstrate the need for greater communication and listening between governmental and non-governmental employees regarding best practices in resettlement. More clarity in both written and spoken communication could advance the ability to work together towards the same goal of supporting former refugees.

Media and institutional reports from both countries emphasise the value that successfully resettled refugees add to their communities. Such success depends, in part, on the quality and range of services provided to refugee-background residents, especially in the first months and years of resettlement, as they are challenged by new societies and their languages, values, institutions, bureaucracies, and similar. Therefore, it is critical for political institutions to review and evaluate their refugee policies and the implications of those policies in an ongoing manner. As such, this report will include diverse perspectives from policymakers, staff working with refugee-background residents, and former refugee residents themselves.

1 CONTEXTS: HISTORY, POLICY, AND SOCIETY

Since well before the Common Era,¹⁷ there have been historical accounts of “refugees” – people fleeing their homelands in hopes of finding safety in another land. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the first use of the word in English occurred around 1671. Derived from the French *refugié*, it was used to refer to Huguenots who fled France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to avoid religious persecution after the Edict of Nantes was revoked in 1685.¹⁸ These words derive from the Latin, *refugium*, “to flee to a place of refuge.” During World War One, the usage shifted slightly, from one seeking asylum to one fleeing home.¹⁹

The end of World War II saw well over one million people uprooted from their homes, hungry and searching for shelter and safety. To address this crisis, delegates from 26 countries met in Geneva in 1951 and debated, compromised, and finally adopted the *1951 Convention related to the Status of Refugees*, outlining the rights, responsibilities, and protections due to refugees. It begins with a definition that is widely accepted internationally: a person who:

owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.²⁰

The original document limited the scope primarily to European refugees and to events that occurred before 1 January 1951.²¹ New Zealand became a signatory to the 1951 Convention in 1960. Although the United States helped to craft the 1951 Convention Related to the Status of Refugees, Congress never ratified it. Not until after the drafting of the 1967 Protocol, which extended convention rights and protections to those who became refugees after 1951, did the United States become a signatory in 1968. New Zealand also ratified the Protocol in 1973.

New Zealand and the United States were, however, resettling WW II refugees beginning in the 1940s. With the Displaced Persons Act of 1948, the US admitted 400,000 refugees by 1952.²² New Zealand began in 1944 with the approval of 800 Polish refugees, 734 of whom were children. Both countries continue to resettle ever-changing refugee populations as a result of persecution and wars throughout the world. The Vietnamese War brought thousands of Southeast Asian refugees to both countries, followed by refugees from the former Yugoslavia and a number of African nations. In the twenty-first century, both countries offered resettlement to Burmese, Bhutanese, Afghanis, Iraqis, Somalis, and others. Both nations have also recognised

¹⁷ Common Era (CE) and Before the Common Era (BCE) are secular alternatives for referring to time periods in the western traditional calendar.

¹⁸ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*

¹⁹ *Online Etymology Dictionary*

²⁰ Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees

²¹ Wilkinson, Ray (2001)

²² President Truman was unhappy with this Act, stating that it discriminated against displaced Jews and Catholics. See *The American Presidency Project*.

that gender-based violence, though not specified in the Convention or Protocol, is inhumanity whose victims deserve refugee-status protection.

Refugee Policy since World War II

Mid-twentieth century laws and policies of both New Zealand and the United States were designed to address the catastrophic effects on Europeans resulting from the Second World War. These refugees were of European background, and the majority of adults had education and employment similar to that of nations offering to resettle them. However, ongoing world crises and tensions – the Hungarian Revolution, Cuban crisis, war in Uganda, Vietnam War, Pol Pot regime in Cambodia, and more – indicated the need for policies that addressed the greater diversity of refugees and that standardised policies and procedures. The United States enacted the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962, followed by the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 and the Refugee Act of 1980, intended to abolish the national origins policies utilised by the United States since the 1920s to prevent immigration from Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Similarly in New Zealand, a 1986 immigration policy review and the 1987 Immigration Act ended the favouring of immigration from Ireland and the United Kingdom as well as discrimination towards Asian immigration.²³

What follows is an examination of the latest laws and policies regarding refugee resettlement in each country.

The United States²⁴

Since 1975, the United States has resettled three million refugees. Some laws enacted during historical events such as the Cold War, the Cuban crisis, and the Vietnam War provided generous allowances for cash and support services to selected groups.²⁵ However, Congressional members expressed concern that *ad hoc* policies were not a responsible way to formulate policy, especially as it became clearer that refugee flows were not diminishing. The last federal law enacted by the US Congress with respect to refugees was the 1980 Refugee Act (Public Law 96-212), spearheaded by Senator Edward Kennedy and signed into law by President Carter. According to Kennedy, the act gave “new statutory authority to the United States’ longstanding commitment to human rights and its traditional humanitarian concern for the plight of refugees around the world.”²⁶ Notably, the act was intended to provide equitable treatment for all refugees, no matter their country of origin, and federal support and coordination of services among federal, state, local, and NGO groups. The act established the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) within the Department of Health and Human Services. The ORR is responsible for distributing funding and creating/administering federal programmes needed for resettlement and integration into US society. The Act also raised the annual ceiling to 50,000 (unless altered by the President for a 12 month period; in recent years, the ceiling has been raised to 70,000-80,000/year), and it broke the previous pattern of limiting refugee status to those fleeing communism in

²³ Recently, New Zealand has limited quota refugees from Africa and the Middle East to those who already have family members in New Zealand.

²⁴ Much of the information for this and the following section on New Zealand comes from the updated 2013 country reports included in the 2011 UNHCR Resettlement Handbook.

²⁵ Zucker, Norman (1983)

²⁶ Kennedy, Edward (1981), p. 142

Soviet states or repression in some Middle Eastern countries.²⁷ It recognised the 1951 Convention definition of refugees, defined provisions for asylum seekers, established assistance in terms of finances and social assistance, and provided for an organised system to process and resettle refugees.

Each year, in consultation with the US State Department, the President determines the ceiling for refugee admissions to Congress. The United States has three priority categories. Priority One are those refugees identified by the UNHCR (or occasionally, US ambassadors or NGOs) to be in urgent need of resettlement. Priority Two are those that the State Department believes are in need of resettlement over other priorities. An example is Cubans, who do not flee their country, but are processed in Cuba and brought to the United States. Priority Three is family reunification. This category was dropped for several years in the past decade due to resettled refugees' attempts to bring in non-biological refugees they considered to be family. The United States now uses biological testing to process for reunification, as does New Zealand.

The 1980 Refugee Act includes the condition that employment and economic self-sufficiency be the priority of the resettlement process. This provision remains unchanged, in spite of the US Government's own research several years later that stated the following:

participation in English language training may foster more English acquisition than employment does, at least in the initial months of resettlement. These findings suggest that some initial language training may be more conducive to English acquisition than immediate placement in employment."²⁸

The Northwest Regional Educational Lab reports also found that refugees who were educated and literate in their own languages learned English more quickly and efficiently than those who were illiterate. In the 1980s, over 80 per cent of resettled refugees had literacy in some language.²⁹ Events in recent years have created higher levels of unschooled and illiterate refugee populations, resulting in lower numbers successfully entering the workforce.³⁰

The third phase of a research project by the Northwest Regional Educational Lab for ORR concluded that "working and going to ESL class tend to be mutually exclusive for most persons."³¹ Additionally:

Of the two, ESL promotes acquisition of English much more than employment. ESL appeared as an important contributor in most analyses while employment appeared in none... That is not to say, however, that encouraging employment does not have important social functions... it may be the case that ESL is more effective than employment early in the resettlement process.³²

Language instruction and social services are also focused on helping former refugees to obtain employment. In fact, many resettled refugees are unable to continue with language classes because they must take whatever employment they can get, and the work hours frequently overlap with English language learning (ELL) classes.

²⁷ Messner, Doris (2010)

²⁸ Reder, Stephen (1984), pp. 60-61

²⁹ Northwest Regional Educational Lab (1982)

³⁰ Halpern, Peggy (2008)

³¹ Arter, Judith *et al.*, p. 22

³² *Idem.*, p. 28

Additionally, the law states that financial assistance is made available “in such a manner as not to discourage their economic self-sufficiency”.³³ In practice, especially in recent years, this emphasis has resulted in economic hardship, inadequate time to learn English, housing in unsafe areas, and pressure on refugee-background residents to take any job they can, regardless of their background and training. When employers are willing to combine employment hours to include language training, results can be more positive, as refugee-background workers can practise their language lessons as they communicate with co-workers.

Of the million migrants that legally enter the United States each year, only about one-tenth is refugees. The federal departments that coordinate the US Refugee Assistance Programme (USRAP) are the Department of Homeland Security, Department of State, and the Department of Health and Human Services. The Department of Homeland Security is responsible for final security checks to determine one’s eligibility to enter the United States. Within the Department of State, the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) works worldwide on the three “durable solutions” for refugees, as outlined by the UNHCR: repatriation, local integration, and resettlement. This bureau also funds the short offshore orientation programme prior to refugees’ arrival in the United States. Depending on the offshore circumstances, orientation can be as short as a few hours or as long as five days. Additionally, PRM funds the Reception and Placement Programme (R&P) designed for resettled refugees’ first 30 days in the United States. This funding (\$1875 per refugee, \$1125 of which must be spent directly on refugees) is provided to one of the nine contracted US resettlement agencies that agree to provide the following services:

- Sponsorship
- Pre-arrival planning
- Reception at the point of arrival
- 30 days of basic needs support: safe and affordable housing, food, clothing, health assistance, application for social security cards and other benefits (such as food stamps and Medicaid), English language instruction, school enrolment, enrolment with employment agencies, and transportation to job interviews/job training (this can be extended for up to 90 days total when required)
- Two home visits
- Case management and individualised service plans
- Cultural orientation
- Assistance to unaccompanied minors

The \$1875 is not intended to cover the full costs of initial reception and placement. Resettlement agencies send grant proposals not only to government bureaus, but also to private foundations and philanthropies, and they hold fund-raising events. The nine current resettlement organisations are Church World Service, Ethiopian Community Development Council, Episcopal Migration Ministries, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, International Rescue Committee, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops/Migration and Refugee Services, and World Relief. Of the nine, six

³³ US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement (2012), Section 411, footnote 1.a.1.A.iii

have religious affiliations. According to the Refugee Act of 1980, they are not allowed to proselytise in their capacity of resettlement.

After this brief initial assistance, more money is available to cities, counties, and non-profit organisations from the ORR (federal and state branches), through the Department of Health and Human Services. This government assistance is available to help fund additional services for up to three years. Agencies submit competitive grant proposals to fund long-term help, such as homework help centres, English language learning, clubs and activities, and medical screenings. Additionally, refugee-background residents can apply for various public benefits, including food and cash assistance, to help them manage their living expenses. Such benefits are not consistent from state to state. Some of the nine resettlement organisations apply for money to extend their services through these grants. At this point, numerous other non-profit organisations can apply to provide these services. Examples would include Refugee Family Services outside Atlanta, Georgia; the Florida Centre for Survivors of Torture and Refugee Services; the Centre for Language and Culture in Jacksonville, Florida; the Spring Institute in Denver, Colorado; and many more.

When the United States was facing its largest quota of refugees at the height of the Vietnam War, the Government created four large reception centres located at military installations in California, Arkansas, Pennsylvania, and Florida. Refugee newcomers stayed at the centres for months while they awaited results of their medical and security screenings. While there, they had opportunities to learn some English and sociocultural practices that would help them once they were able to settle. After these centres were closed, policy directed that large groups be resettled in several targeted cities in the country, areas that had good public transportation, numerous employment opportunities (especially unskilled, as many of the resettled refugees' backgrounds were in farming and non-technological occupations), and low-priced housing. The government bolstered social services in such areas in preparation to resettle refugees. However, policymakers did not anticipate the amount of secondary migration that would occur as former refugees were freely allowed to live anywhere in the country. Enticed by job opportunities, moving closer to other relatives or larger ethnic enclaves, resettled refugees often migrated to locations not prepared to support their unique needs.

In 2010 the ORR developed “Six Guiding Principles” to inform the agency’s approach to service and those of its partners. They are as follows:

- Appropriate Placement and Service through increased communication with the Department of State
- Client-Centred Case Management through attention to individuals’ diverse needs
- Prioritising early employment for self-sufficiency as quickly as possible
- Collaboration with federal partners to improve overseas health screenings and better access to medical and mental health services in the US
- Outreach to improve relationships between resettled refugees, agency partners, and US society
- Data-informed decision making to develop effective programmes and improve knowledge and communications

Point three re-emphasises the goal of employment, as soon as possible. Others are similar to goals in the New Zealand Strategy, such as improving relationships between refugee-background people and US society and improving health screenings and services. The principles have also provided a bit more flexibility for the ORR and its partners to change service and delivery models.

New Zealand

New Zealand began a systematic approach to resettlement with its 1986 Immigration Policy Review and Immigration Act of 1987. These policies established a category for humanitarian immigration (primarily refugees) and created an annual quota for refugee reception, which is currently 750 quota refugees annually. Similarly to the United States, annual targets determine world regions and total allocations per region. Within these categories, New Zealand includes 450 placements the UNHCR considers priority cases (including up to 300 spots for family reunification), up to 35 placements for emergency resettlement, up to 75 for medical cases, and at least 75 for women at risk. The Refugee Quota Branch (RQB) of Immigration New Zealand (INZ) is responsible for determining these regions and allocations, along with the offshore processing. Recent procedures have focused on resettlement of refugees from Asia and Colombia. Immigration New Zealand (INZ) is a group within the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment (MBIE), and it includes a staff specifically designated to work with refugee resettlement. A small number of asylum seekers are determined for refugee status annually (“Convention refugees”), and the Refugee Family Support Category (RFSC) allows an additional 300 family members of resettled refugees to apply for permanent residence. The family members already living in New Zealand must be deemed capable of sponsoring them for two years.

Prior to the latest New Zealand Refugee Settlement Strategy, New Zealand did not offer offshore orientation. Policy reviewers have noted that most refugees know they will be moving to New Zealand nine to twelve months before they actually arrive. The Ministry of Education (MOE) and the MBIE are considering using that waiting period to begin English instruction. Meanwhile, INZ has developed a DVD that describes living and working conditions in New Zealand. INZ has also created regional fact sheets about the resettlement regions in order to introduce the country to those selected to resettle in New Zealand. The RQB also provides a booklet entitled *Welcome to New Zealand*, containing practical information about the country, services, family reunification, and the six-week reception programme.³⁴ As part of the new Strategy, INZ has added an additional offshore interview to find out more about the needs and expectations of incoming refugees and begin to create individualised intake plans for them regarding their resettlement details and employment potential. This information intake is intended to help selected refugees understand more about New Zealand as well as to provide details for resettlement agencies about incoming refugees.

Unlike the United States, the government of New Zealand pays all the travel costs associated with flights to New Zealand and in-country costs associated with reception and initial resettlement of quota refugees. They arrive in six scheduled cycles during the year at the rate of roughly 125 refugees per intake. Each group begins its first six

³⁴ The United States also provides a *Welcome to the United States* booklet to all refugees resettling in the US

weeks in New Zealand at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre (MRRC) where they receive a programme of education and services prior to being resettled into six regions within the country: Auckland, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Wellington, Nelson, and Christchurch.³⁵

A number of re-organisations, both within ministries and government/NGO partnerships, occurred in the first decade of the twenty-first century for both political and strategic reasons that affected resettlement strategy and services. For example, 2003-2004 saw the advent of the New Zealand Settlement Strategy that attempted to address both refugee and other migrant needs. The strategy called for defined roles for various ministries and government departments, opportunities for inter-agency coordination and communication. The Department of Labour, along with the Ministry for Social Development, led in refugee initiatives. The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) came into existence in 2012, merging four former departments and ministries: the Department of Labour, Department of Building and Housing, Ministry of Science and Innovation, and Ministry of Economic Development. The New Zealand Government directed the MBIE to lead in creating a separate strategy for refugee resettlement, begun by the Ministry of Labour in 2010, which was approved in 2012. This new Strategy created a stronger emphasis on employment and strategic alliances between ministries and agencies to provide multiple services and supports through four stages of resettlement (pre-arrival, reception, initial settlement, and towards integration) with the goal of full integration and self-sufficiency. In 2013, Refugee Services Aotearoa merged with the New Zealand Red Cross to provide more comprehensive services once refugees are settled into communities.

The overarching goal of the Strategy is as follows:

Refugees are participating fully and integrated socially and economically as soon as possible so that they are living independently, undertaking the same responsibilities and exercising the same rights as other New Zealanders and have a strong sense of belonging to their own community and to New Zealand.

The goal is broken down further into five outcomes. Priority is given to the first two, and strategists recognise the remaining three to be integrated with the major goals:

1. Self-sufficiency through employment
2. Participation in New Zealand life
3. Healthy, safe, and independent lives
4. Sufficient English language skills to participate in education and daily life
5. Safe, secure, and affordable housing

Refugee newcomers receive health assessments (physical and mental) and initial treatment, settlement planning, personalised “pathways” to employment, and English language learning at MRRC. School-aged refugees attend classrooms appropriate to their age/ability: preschool, early primary, late primary, intermediate, or secondary level. During this time they learn about school life in New Zealand before being placed in a public school. The curriculum had been created by teaching specialists

³⁵ Since the earthquakes of 2010 and 2011, only family reunification refugees have been resettled in Christchurch, due to lack of safe and affordable housing, although the area is being reconsidered for 2016.

from AUT. With the new Strategy, INZ has had significant influence on the adult curriculum to ensure the emphasis on employment.

This initial reception period compares with the initial 30-day settlement provisions provided through US reception centres. The obvious benefit of the MRRC is that refugee newcomers have six weeks to acclimatise prior to being placed in New Zealand communities and public schools. The current disadvantage is the facility itself: the centre was built from World War II barracks, some of which have deteriorated beyond repair. As a result, agencies are scattered throughout the complex, and the atmosphere can seem military-like, in spite of efforts to beautify the complex. However, plans are under way to build a new reception centre designed specifically for the purpose of refugee orientation and services. It is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2015.

The New Zealand Red Cross signed a contract with the MBIE to become the provider of ongoing services for refugee-background residents to support them in their daily lives, including learn-to-drive programmes and career counselling. Other ministries, such as the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Development, and the Ministry of Health, fund programmes that advance English language learning, housing, family support, employment, recreation, and culture. Numerous NGOs, such as Refugees as Survivors, Changemakers Refugee Forum, English Language Partners, and others, also provide services and create ways for refugees to voice concerns. The MBIE funds refugee organisations that facilitate Strengthening Refugee Voices. The issues of these regional groups are brought up at annual regional and national forums.

Educational Policy

The UNHCR recognises that education should be viewed as an essential need for refugee children and youth, and not a luxury that falls far behind basics such as food, water, and shelter. Some kind of structured educational programme can provide a sense of stability and purpose for children waiting in refugee camps. It can also provide a sense of hope that they will be able to move on to better opportunities. Those who receive education in pre-flight and flight stages of their refugee journey have a better chance to become leaders as they move into one of the durable refugee solutions of repatriation, integration, or resettlement. Unfortunately, a large percentage of refugee children in flight do not have access to education. Therefore, they will arrive to a resettlement country with gaps in their education, or perhaps with no educational background at all.

Education is a certain need for resettled refugee students. It is also an obligation of signatories to the 1951 Convention and/or 1967 Protocol, as stated in Article 22 on public education:

1. The Contracting States shall accord to refugees the same treatment as is accorded to nationals with respect to elementary education.
2. The Contracting States shall accord to refugees treatment as favourable as possible, and, in any event, not less favourable than that accorded to aliens generally in the same circumstances, with respect to education other than elementary education and, in particular, as regards access to studies, the recognition of foreign school certificates, diplomas and degrees, the remission of fees and charges and the award of scholarships.

A country's schools are its primary pathways to pass on, formally and informally, aspects of the national culture as well as subject knowledge. Such cultural capital increases individuals' opportunities for successful employment and social participation. Forty per cent of resettled refugees in New Zealand are children.³⁶ In the United States, the figure is approximately 43 per cent.³⁷ They frequently shoulder responsibilities for not only their own lives, but also for taking care of their parents. Opportunities for well-paying jobs are important for them to manage these responsibilities and to provide the best possible background for their own children in their country of resettlement.

This section will delineate laws and policies of the United States and New Zealand with respect to public education.

The United States

In the United States, the US Department of Education maintains an Office of English Language Acquisition (name changed from the Office of Bilingual Education during the George W Bush administration). Its primary mission is to support English language learning for non-native students. This office provides a clearinghouse of information about English language instruction and provides grant information related to English language learning. Other programmes, such as homework help, employing bilingual liaison workers, providing summer camps, and maintaining parent involvement programmes, may be partly funded through the Refugee School Impact Grant, part of the Division of Refugee Assistance that falls under the ORR. The grant was established in 1998 to assist local school systems educating "significant numbers of refugee children".³⁸ Currently, 36 states are grantees under this funding pool (\$15 million annual total since its origin in 1998). Individual states determine whether grants go directly to schools, to resettlement agencies, or both. Programmes funded by this grant can only provide services to former refugees who have lived in the United States for three years or less.

Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services, or BRYCS, maintains on its website the largest online collection of resources pertaining to refugee-background (and immigrant) children and families.³⁹ Its databases include a section on "Promising Practices," including how some organisations have used the Refugee School Impact Grant. As an example, the Centre for Language and Culture in Jacksonville, Florida, provides a refugee-background family resource centre providing English language lessons for adults; tutoring and homework help provided by ESOL-certified teachers after school and on Saturdays; summer camp that provides academics, arts, and field trips; school intake, testing, and information; and informational sessions on topics such as affordable housing, personal safety, parenting, and more. It is partially funded by a Refugee School Impact Grant. Refugee Family Services (RFS) in the metro Atlanta, Georgia, area provides a School Liaison Programme, also partially funded by the grant. RFS trains refugee-background adults to assist former refugee parents with school meetings and school culture. They make the families aware of services to help them navigate the school system, and they provide teacher workshops explaining the backgrounds and needs of refugee students and parents. Liaisons provide service to 70

³⁶ Refugee Policy, Scoop Independent News, 10 February 2014

³⁷ Batalova, Jeanne (2009)

³⁸ BRYCS (2009)

³⁹ BRYCS (2014)

metro Atlanta schools, and they offer services to families in 18 languages. An external evaluation of the programme indicated that it resulted in significant improvement in parental understanding of the schools and knowledge to support their children's education as well as improving teacher attitudes and ability to work with refugee-background students.⁴⁰

New Zealand

The Strategy includes education as a main goal, but most of the adult education provisions are linked to English-language instruction necessary for obtaining employment. For youth and children, however, the New Zealand Ministry of Education (MOE) has a clear and comprehensive portion of its website devoted to explaining the refugee experience and the needs of refugee-background students, as well as a refugee handbook for teachers and contact information for regional refugee education coordinators. Its research division funded a large-scale project on working with refugee-background children in New Zealand Schools, edited by educational psychologists Richard Hamilton at the University of Auckland and Dennis Moore at Monash University.⁴¹ Under the umbrella of the new Strategy, the MOE features a key goal for refugee-background students: that 85 per cent of the 18-year-olds attain the NCEA Level 2 or its equivalent, given they have had at least five years of education in New Zealand schools. There is nothing comparable on the US Department of Education's website. Some states offer information about refugee students⁴², but not typically on state department of education websites. Neither New Zealand nor the United States has a requirement that students training to become teachers receive information about working with resettled refugees in their university curricula, although the MOE does provide a teacher's handbook, the *Refugee Handbook for Schools*, available free on its website.

The MOE has several policies and programmes directed at supporting former refugee students and their families. Help is available to provide for English language acquisition. Schools can apply for supplementary funding to support each refugee-background student attending their campus, varying by age and the number of years the child has been in New Zealand. The money provides for ESOL instruction and professional development for teachers wanting to become ESOL instructors. Another programme is Refugee Computers in Homes, which provides a refurbished computer for former refugee families with school-aged children along with computer training for the parents. There is a competitive selection process for this programme. The Ministry's Flexible Funding and the Refugee Pathways and Careers proposals provide for schools with large refugee-background populations to create additional support such as homework centres, liaison support, career guidance, and individual casework with refugee students. Five regional Refugee Education Coordinators are available to help resettlement areas with educational support and direction. Some schools with large populations of former refugees also hire school refugee staff to coordinate and direct school-specific opportunities for refugee-background students and parents. There is a Student Allowance designed to help those wanting to study at universities or technical institutions. And all youth can tap into a fees-free Youth Guarantee that provides alternatives from traditional school pathways.

⁴⁰ McBrien, Jody & Ford, Jillian (2012)

⁴¹ Hamilton & Moore (2004)

⁴² An excellent example is found at Steucker, Jill (2006)

There is not a requirement in the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol, nor in recent laws in the United States or New Zealand for adult education. As mentioned earlier, at the times of the Convention and Protocol, the European refugees had educational backgrounds not unlike their new nations; and early refugees from Vietnam tended to be well educated. Updated policies in both countries create some funding options for adult English language learning, but many refugee newcomers are either on waiting lists to join such programmes, or their work schedules do not permit them to attend.⁴³ In New Zealand, Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) offers fees-free English language courses to those who are seeking employment. The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) offers them to former refugees trying to further their studies. Some programmes in New Zealand also offer additional training opportunities for refugee-background adults to help them become more independent in their communities and ready for work. Opportunities and challenges will be detailed in Chapter 3.

Social Attitudes towards Immigrants and Refugees

Community integration is a two-way process. In order for resettled refugees to participate in community life, they must feel welcomed to do so. When both policymakers and social service providers discuss whether or not a community is prepared to resettle refugees, they typically consider issues such as these: Is there public transport? Are there jobs available for people who are not fluent in the primary language of the culture? Is there low-income housing? Are there sufficient medical and social services? When organisations present workshops about refugees in or coming to the community, they typically invite those who are likely to work with newly resettled refugees: social service workers, doctors, lawyers, law enforcement officers, etc. Usually such workshops are only advertised to those working with resettlement, and sometimes they are even closed to the general public. To feel truly included, however, former refugees need to become a part of the larger community. Thus local residents need positive information about the newcomers in order to be supportive.

Both New Zealand and the United States are nations composed of immigrants. Although Polynesians did not find Aotearoa until sometime between 1250 and 1300, and North America was inhabited since the Stone Age, both countries had established populations before the arrival of and conquest by Europeans. First European settlements in both nations were established by British Protestant settlers. Diverse and problematic attitudes towards the original indigenous people, new immigrants, and resettled refugees occur in both countries (see Appendix A for a brief history of social attitudes towards immigration in the United States and New Zealand).

Responses of settled populations to migrants and refugees are an important element of welcoming or isolation. Attitudes of discrimination and racism affect newcomers and their abilities to find employment, good housing, adequate care, and education. Political and social policies have been instrumental in both rejection and support.

The United States

The United States continues to deal with the aftermath of involuntary migration of slaves that began during the period of exploration and settlement. During the Obama

⁴³ Krishnan, Plumridge, and Ferguson (2011), Part 3

administration, detractors have accused the President of being a non-native American, and pro-gun activist and guitarist Ted Nugent called him a ‘subhuman mongrel’ in 2014.⁴⁴ Politicians and pundits have insulted him with racist remarks throughout his presidency.⁴⁵ In May 2014, an elected New Hampshire police commissioner called the President a “nigger” and refused to apologise, stating “I do not apologize – he meets and exceeds my criteria for such.”⁴⁶ In April 2014 Nevada rancher Cliven Bundy, embroiled in a fight for refusing to pay for grazing his cattle on federal property, caused further controversy by stating at a daily news conference that he thought “Negro people” were better off as slaves.⁴⁷ Many Black refugee newcomers are stunned by racial intolerance they may experience for the first time upon arrival in the United States, whether subtle or blatant.

Current attitudes towards immigration are reflected in the Congress’ longstanding reluctance to move forward on immigration reform bills. Anti-immigrant legislation in Arizona has resulted in state police profiling and targeting Hispanic residents, whether they are legally documented or not, according to a second complaint lodged by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) that the law is being applied unconstitutionally.⁴⁸ Practices such as these have caused widespread fear among both legal immigrants and undocumented ones.

Regarding recent refugee resettlement, some areas with resettlement services in place are feeling overburdened as they struggle to recover from the recession of 2008-2009. In 2011 the Mayor of Manchester, New Hampshire, requested a temporary moratorium on refugee resettlement, as did the Springfield, Massachusetts, Mayor in 2013. Also in 2013, the Governor of Georgia requested a 50-55 per cent decrease in resettlement. Current sentiment in Wyoming regarding an Autumn 2013 proposal by the Republican Governor, Matt Mead, to consider a refugee resettlement programme in the state (the only US state without such a programme) is raising a frenzy of both support and racist negativity, as reported by the state’s newspapers.

The Southern Poverty Law Centre, a US-based organisation that fights for human rights and against bigotry, listed 939 active hate groups in the United States in 2013.⁴⁹ Such groups’ opinions and speech are protected by the first amendment in the United States Constitution. People verbally attacked by such groups and individuals, whether they be the Westboro Baptist Church, whose website is “godhatesfags.com”; or Rush Limbaugh, whose radio commentary regularly includes inflammatory speech about women, immigrants and liberal politics, have little recourse. Individuals can pursue litigation for defamation of character, but this is a difficult, expensive pursuit not easily won.

Obviously there are millions of Americans who care about the plight of refugees, and thousands actively help them to resettle successfully into their communities and schools. The fact that 49 states have sponsorship systems in place makes a strong case for continuing and strengthening support for annual admissions. Unfortunately, probably due to lack of formal education and too much confusion created by media

⁴⁴ Fernandez, Manny, *New York Times*, 21 February 2014

⁴⁵ Challenge Campaign, *Chicago Sun-Times*, 1 March 2012

⁴⁶ Associated Press, 16 May 2014

⁴⁷ Terkel, Amanda, *Huffington Post*, 24 April 2014.

⁴⁸ Dinan, Stephen, *Washington Times*, 6 April 2014.

⁴⁹ Southern Poverty Law Centre (2013)

hype and outspoken groups, many US citizens are unclear about immigration. They do not know the difference between refugee-background residents and other immigrants. Many think that resettled refugees are undocumented immigrants who arrive in the United States from terrorist organisations. Such misunderstandings contribute to the challenge resettled refugees experience, especially those from negatively stereotyped groups such as Blacks, Hispanics, and Muslims.

New Zealand

New Zealand has created legislation to strengthen Article 20.2 of the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: “Any advocacy of national, racial, or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility, or violence shall be prohibited by law.”⁵⁰ Both the Race Relations Act of 1971 and Sections 61 and 131 of the Human Rights Act of 1993 prohibit “incitement to racial disharmony” and threatening, abusive speech towards people based on their colour, race, ethnicity, or national background.⁵¹ However, the Human Rights Commission of New Zealand points out that the complaints about hateful expression are difficult to prosecute.

There appears to be no list of hate groups in New Zealand, but a news article from 2012 indicates that there are some in the country, though most are not based in resettlement areas.⁵² Right Wing Resistance appears to be the largest, but others exist, such as Blood and Honour, National Front, Southland Skinheads, and Independent Skinheads. Several physical attacks by members of these groups were also recorded in the news article. A 2014 incident in which two New Zealand boys bullied a refugee-background student from Burma resulted in his hospitalisation with a suspected broken neck.⁵³ Five news articles from May 2014 describe negative stereotypes and discrimination that refugee-background and migrant residents experience in New Zealand with regards to schooling, employment, and housing.^{54,55,56,57,58}

Education is one key to improving public opinion about refugee-background residents. Much of the population in both countries are simply unaware of refugee resettlement in their nations, and without accurate information, they are unlikely to know their circumstances or their determination for a better life. Both formal education and public education needs to be improved to increase public understanding. Positive media stories, public forums, celebrations, and other publicity can improve relations between resettled refugees and settled communities in both countries. Examples will be included in Chapter 4.

⁵⁰ ICCPR, Article 20.2

⁵¹ New Zealand Human Rights Commission (n.d.)

⁵² White Power, www.stuff.co.nz, 1 April 2012

⁵³ Duff, Michelle, www.stuff.co.nz, 14 March 2014

⁵⁴ Sherwood, 7 May 2014a

⁵⁵ Sherwood, 7 May 2014b

⁵⁶ Leveson, 13 May 2014

⁵⁷ Day, 14 May 2014

⁵⁸ Tan, 23 May 2014

2 WHICH COMES FIRST (AND SECOND AND THIRD...)?

When unveiling the New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy in December 2012, former Immigration Minister Nathan Guy stated:

“All of the research tells us that finding employment remains the biggest challenge for refugees settling here. We know that having a job helps to improve confidence, self-esteem, and to fit into New Zealand society.”⁵⁹

This statement is true on many levels. Jobs can improve one’s sense of confidence and self-esteem. Going to a workplace daily can help newcomers meet colleagues who can become friends, many of whom could be native New Zealanders. Clearly, given statistics provided in Chapter One, refugee-background residents have had a hard time finding employment, even after 10 years in New Zealand. This problem is part of the impetus to place more emphasis on helping former refugees find jobs.

Jobs can also lower one’s sense of confidence and self-esteem, especially when they provide a low income or are below the level of the worker’s expertise. They can increase health risks related to stress, especially when the employee is threatened by frequent redundancies, part-time pay, and changing shifts. Employment can further segregate newcomers when they are in jobs rarely chosen by the majority population, or at which all the majority population staff are in positions superior to the refugee-background workers. One education employee I interviewed had this to say about work available to her students’ parents when I asked about adult ELL resources in her city:

A lot of the parents are not getting the language classes that they need. Some have employment, but they’re cleaning and things. They’ve got low pay and hard hours. Often they’re working at night so the kids are left to their own devices. And when they’re doing those sorts of jobs, they’re not learning language. It’s not integrating them into the community. In some ways it’s keeping them separate from the community. They’re working on their own. They’ll be in a school or something, cleaning by themselves in the middle of the night, and it’s not – how is that helping them integrate into the community? How is it helping them learn the language? It’s not.

Discussions about policy changing from considerable government assistance to a priority of obtaining work as soon as possible is part of a larger conversation by the National Party about economic and business growth. It also hints that refugees may not try to find work because they can live well enough off the welfare state. A senior MBIE manager said this was indeed the case: that, unfortunately, resettled refugees arrive eager to work, but dependence on so many welfare benefits dissuades them from seeking employment. This manager was concerned that refugee-background residents were denied “the dignity of employment” because they were not being properly counselled on how they can maintain the same amount of income through a combination of work and benefits that they receive through benefits alone.

The 2011 New Zealand report on Bhutanese refugees, however, describes the frustration these refugee-background individuals have living on benefits, as so few were able to obtain employment.⁶⁰ The 2004 report *Refugee Voices* also indicated

⁵⁹ “New Refugee Resettlement Strategy Unveiled” (11 December 2012)

⁶⁰ Ferguson (2011)

different reasons for unemployment. Some resettled refugees could not work due to physical or mental illnesses. Others chose to study first, to learn English and train for career opportunities. Those looking for employment encountered other barriers that cannot be overcome simply by looking for work. They lost out when jobs were not advertised but filled through informal networks. They were not hired or hired at low rates because they could not speak English well or because their employers did not understand their circumstances. Difficulty with English was the most cited reason for unemployment among former refugees interviewed after six months and two years in New Zealand.⁶¹ Even those who were employed discussed the low pay, lack of opportunity to advance, safety concerns, inability to use their qualifications and expertise, and discrimination by co-workers.

The Executive Summary of the Strategy states that the five outcomes – self-sufficiency, participation, health and wellbeing, education, and housing are interrelated:

While self-sufficiency and participation are the principal outcomes demonstrating economic and social integration, their achievement is supported by, and reliant on, improved outcomes in health and wellbeing, education, and housing.⁶²

The 2012 MBIE report on long-term resettlement states that:

a lack of proficiency in the host language is a major barrier to employment and accessing training. It can also be a barrier to making friends outside the ethnic community and to accessing health or other services.⁶³

This research prioritised English, stating, “Not being able to speak the host language is not only a barrier to economic integration but also to social interaction and full participation in New Zealand society.”⁶⁴

If changes in the reception programme at MRRC are an indication of the new policy in practice, however, the emphasis is clearly on jobs, right from the first days in New Zealand. The difference is demonstrated by the change in time spent discussing employment, from three hours in the former programme to 55 hours in the new plan. An examination of the first three phases of resettlement (pre-arrival, reception, and initial settlement) also uses language that prioritises employment, in nearly every major point:

Pre-arrival Phase:

- Improved orientation information for refugees, *in particular to establish expectations relating to self-sufficiency and employment in New Zealand*
- Better information *collection about refugees’ employment experience, educational attainment and English language proficiency that will help to assess employment options on arrival*

Reception Phase Changes for working-age adults:

⁶¹ Refugee Voices (2004), p. 242

⁶² Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, The New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy, p. 4

⁶³ Searle *et al.* (2012), p. 35

⁶⁴ *Idem.*, (2012), p. vii

- Reinforce the *expectations of employment assessment* and away from welfare entitlements
- *Introduce employment assessment*
- Complement the *employment-related changes*

Initial Settlement Phase:

- *Expectations of self-sufficiency continue to be reinforced and the employment assessment undertaken at reception is progressed*
- Resettlement locations are selected with a *higher priority on access to employment*⁶⁵

In responding to the concerns of agencies involved in resettlement, the Government has stated that these changes will not affect ways in which New Zealand determines refugees for resettlement. New Zealand is proud that it resettles refugees who are refused by other nations due to health or other challenging circumstances, and it plans to continue. The second offshore interview after selection, however, is intended to make clear the work expectations as well as create a beginning case report about the individuals' needs and work possibilities.

The recommendation of this policy analysis is not that employment is a less important factor for integrating resettled refugees. It is important for maintaining other goals for resettlement, and work can provide former refugees with pride and meaning, staving off depression. The analysis will, however, argue for a shifting of priorities based on the government's own research and that of others who have examined these goals in other contexts. Recommendations will suggest that the primary goals of the Strategy are, rather, logical outcomes of addressing two of the secondary goals first. In brief, health is often the first and most basic need for former refugees, both physical and psychological. Sometimes issues are buried in the flurry of arrival needs and activities, only to resurface in later months and even years. Obviously, former refugees cannot work effectively if they are not healthy.

Former refugees are also less likely to attain more than minimum wage jobs if they do not speak the country's primary language well or have the skills needed to enter the work force. When these goals are accomplished, they have better odds of successfully applying for and maintaining a job that may provide a career path. With improved health and skills to access a meaningful job, refugees will then be more capable of finding safe and affordable housing, and they will have the abilities to participate fully and give back to New Zealand society. Reaching these goals will also make them more likely to become loyal to New Zealand, with a greater sense of belonging. The additional piece not addressed in the new Strategy is that participation and belonging is a two-way process. Reports of discrimination in employment and housing cannot be overcome without a strategy to teach New Zealanders why it makes sense to welcome refugees.

Governments and policymakers must remain aware of the primary reason for resettlement. That is, to help civilian members of a society escape grave danger to themselves and their families in their home countries. The reasons are first of all

⁶⁵ New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy: Implementation Framework 2013. Emphases mine. Only one point was left out, in the initial settlement phase, because it did not directly refer to employment.

humanitarian. Refugees do not apply for residence in a new country because they want to or because they seek better employment opportunities, but because they must escape a real and immediate threat. Indeed, refugee resettlement involves expenditures by the host country to follow obligations expressed in the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol. This is an honourable financial obligation with a specific humanitarian, not economic, purpose.

Refugee-background residents can indeed become highly valued members of their new country, but they need time to adjust. Especially for those who come with high skills, they will not contribute fully if they must remain in jobs with low skill requirements. Policy amendments to rearrange the priorities of resettlement would increase the up-front cost. In the long term, however, the returns by resettled refugees employed in jobs befitting their skills would more than offset the initial investment. There is also a mid-range solution that could work for some, but only as employers are in agreement: provisions to grant time for refugee employees to learn English while on the job. This could work if government offered some employer compensation for paying refugee employees to increase their English skills.

There is a caveat to this argument. Over half of refugees resettled in New Zealand do not come with strong educational backgrounds, literacy skills, or skilled training for employment. “Dignity of employment” must recognise the value of low-skilled jobs that are of critical importance to the vitality and economy of a country. There are certainly refugee newcomers who want to and can be gainfully employed quickly, and without high levels of English acquisition. For these refugee-background residents, many employers need informal instruction on the benefits of hiring former refugees and treating them with dignity. Some employers have successfully included English language learning on the job. English Language Partners offers a programme called English for Employment, which is offered specifically for refugee employees who want to improve their abilities to communicate at work. This can help workers continue to practise their new language on the job, and prepare them for handling greater responsibilities. The concern of this analysis is that emphasis is placed on quickly obtaining employment, such that other important first steps may be undervalued or overlooked.

A second argument is that the phrase in the Strategy regarding economic independence “as soon as possible” does not refer to gaining employment in a time efficiency sense. Instead, “as soon as possible” means when the resettled refugee is able, mentally and physically, as a result of having needs met for health and wellbeing, and language skills and education/training. One senior manager I interviewed at the MBIE said the following:

“A cynic might say, ‘Get them off the books quickly in terms of fiscal commitment.’ I would say that’s more of a spinoff benefit. The greater good is that people are able to be successful and self-sufficient as soon as possible. I agree that’s what the strategy says and people will understand that we want people working as soon as possible. That’s the point – it’s ‘as soon as possible.’ It’s not possible when you’re traumatised.”

Another MBIE manager echoed that sentiment, stating that he made it clear in all his contractual arrangements that humanitarian support was primary. Current Minister of Immigration Michael Woodhouse also spoke of humanitarian purposes of resettlement as well as the new Strategy centring on employment and the new Mangere curriculum focusing on employment at the 2014 World Refugee Day event at Parliament. There

is no reason to doubt the sincerity and credibility of the Ministry managers. If this is the intention understood by the ministries, however, the rhetoric surrounding the Strategy (and perhaps the new curriculum emphasis at MRRC) needs to better reflect this understanding, as it is not the interpretation of many who provide day to day services to refugee-background clients. In listening to and reading the information about the Strategy, most non-governmental participants in this study understood it to mean that work is more important than the other priorities. Other Ministry staff interviewed have told me that resettled refugees would not be expected to work until they are healthy, but that work is more important than learning English, and that it is appropriate for employment services to take precedence over English language classes. In this case, the work versus language skills is an area for additional debate, but the point about health needs more clarity in the Strategy document itself.

This chapter will proceed to examine health and refugee-background employment, and the following will examine needs in terms of education.

Health

Many former refugees present with numerous physical and mental health challenges due to conditions of the refugee journey. Most have experienced intense and prolonged fears during the pre-flight and flight stages of the journey when they may have been threatened, pursued, imprisoned, tortured, or raped. Long journeys with inadequate food, clothing, and shelter can result in both physical and mental trauma. Those who spent time in camps, especially for prolonged time periods, probably experienced lack of sufficient food, water, healthcare, and education. Protracted time of dependency on international aid, with no legal access to employment, can lead to depression and gender-based violence, especially for men, as the women continue in traditional roles of caring for children and fulfilling domestic roles. Camps are frequent sites of epidemics, and lack of care can create long-term health issues. There is frequent violence and lack of security in camps, and lack of purpose can induce “learned helplessness”⁶⁶ in terms of motivation. Struggles with officials, police, and the military teach many refugees to distrust authority figures. In spite of safer conditions in a resettlement country and the promise of a better life, resettlement forces refugees to part with other members of their cultural community as well as family members, bringing additional emotional challenges.

The culmination of these multiple forms of trauma, sometimes lasting more than a decade, take time to heal. For some, concentrating on a new job may take their minds off past tragedies, though it is likely they will internalise unprocessed events and ultimately need some mental health care. Certainly research indicates that refugees resettled in New Zealand for multiple years suffer from demoralisation when they are still not able to gain employment.⁶⁷ For most, however, adding another stress of job seeking in the first months of resettlement creates an onerous burden that might not be humanitarian. Especially given the attitudes of employers that are presented in some New Zealand studies and reports, the newcomers may face yet another stress as they experience bias and discrimination from employees and the workplace. To have the best opportunities for acquiring and maintaining a beneficial job, refugees need

⁶⁶ The theory of learned helplessness suggests that when people are subject to negative situations repeatedly, over which they have no control, they become likely to stop trying even when circumstances change, because they believe they cannot escape an aversive situation.

⁶⁷ Briggs, L. (2013)

varying amounts of time to present a healthy, confident presence to potential employers.

The Relationship between Health and Employment

Research on employment overwhelmingly indicates that health and wellbeing correlate to increased productivity and reduced absence from the job. A UK report stated that poor health reduced productivity in businesses by 55 per cent.⁶⁸ Additionally, workers taking on “precarious jobs”⁶⁹ indicate likelihood for greater health risks, an argument against taking any job offer.⁷⁰ These jobs offer no security and have negative implications for stress, family relationships, and community involvement, according to a 2013 report conducted by McMaster University and United Way Toronto.⁷¹

In an insightful research article on the history of globalisation, Ostry notes a growing trend in most industrialised nations:

the rise in non-traditional work arrangements such as increases in the proportion of labour force employed part-time, employed in shift work, and self-employed, and in the proportion of workers holding multiple jobs and casual/temporary jobs.⁷²

Ostry demonstrated that part-time and multiple jobs are highly correlated. Restructuring and downsizing of manufacturing jobs has led to an increase in work pace, reduction in employee autonomy, ongoing unemployment threat, and cyclical unemployment, increasing psychosocial stress associated with increased health risks. Opportunities for low-skill and uneducated employees are shrinking in high-tech nations, while highest rates of employment growth are available for highly educated, skilled workers. Ostry goes on to cite evidence that “task-level work conditions characterized by low control and low social support in combination with high demand consistently predict high rates of cardiovascular disease and sickness absence.”⁷³ Marginalisation, low pay, and the increasing tendency of developed nations to reduce welfare and unemployment benefits has increased the burdens of financial strain for such workers and their families, adding to the likelihood for cardiopulmonary and other stress-related health conditions.

Employment

International documents, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1951 Refugee Convention, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights emphasise the right to work, and the UNHCR describes economic self-sufficiency as a key to successful resettlement. Meaningful employment – described by the Changemakers Refugee Forum as “adequately remunerated, fulfilling employment that is commensurate with a person’s skills and qualification”⁷⁴ can build former refugees’ sense of self-respect and dignity while allowing them to

⁶⁸ Tryon (2014)

⁶⁹ Jobs that are short-term, part-time, easily made redundant, or not providing a living wage.

⁷⁰ Inoue *et al.* (2014)

⁷¹ Monsebraaten (23 February 2013)

⁷² Ostry (2009), p. 49

⁷³ *Idem*, p. 52

⁷⁴ Changemakers (2012)

care for themselves and family members, pay for their life necessities, and feel more a part of the greater community. Meaningful employment ought to also include safe working conditions and respect for all employees, whether it be low- or high-skilled.

The Strategy states:

Employment provides income, status, the ability to support family and social links. Meeting challenges at work can support a sense of personal satisfaction and much of people's social contact is provided through their jobs. Unemployment is associated with poorer mental health and lower levels of satisfaction with life.⁷⁵

Read from the perspective of someone who is working at meaningful employment that matches his or her abilities and qualifications, these statements make sense. However, New Zealand research indicates that former refugees seeking employment face numerous obstacles, many of which are constructed by employers' own prejudices and misunderstandings.^{76,77} These challenges result in large numbers of former refugees who are employed part-time or who are underemployed. Former professionals employed as janitors or warehouse packers are not likely to feel gratification in their status, gain a sense of personal satisfaction, or find acquaintances with whom they want to socialise outside of the workplace. In contrast with the last statement quoted, underemployment and "precarious employment," are correlated with physical and mental illness. Additionally, self-sufficiency does not equate to low levels of income that leave people feeling incapable of meeting their needs. The 2012 MBIE report on 10 years living in New Zealand indicated that the average weekly income for refugee-background employees was \$381, compared with the average of \$687 for the New Zealand population.⁷⁸ Nearly two-thirds of the refugees interviewed stated that they had insufficient funds to manage their everyday needs.

Ostry⁷⁹ commented that employment is a two-way relationship, and it is as important to educate employers about hiring refugees as it is to motivate refugees to seek jobs, perhaps more so. In speaking with managers at recruiting agencies, Ostry learned that many employers did not want to hire foreign job seekers. They fear misunderstandings due to language and culture, and they worry that their other employees will shoulder more responsibilities as a result. Migrants also stated that they would rarely make it to the interview stage and they sensed bias in the hiring process. They requested more help in finding jobs and in communicating their value to employers. The MBIE 2012 report⁸⁰ documented that employment needs and refugee frustrations with their current employment support needed significantly more emphasis in terms of gaining local experience at jobs, networking to support employment opportunities, and targeting youth needs as they transition from school to work. It also highlighted the fact that language training and English language learning are needed and must be provided for those who cannot attend more traditional avenues due to their work hours.

⁷⁵ Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, New Zealand Resettlement Strategy (2012), p. 8

⁷⁶ Refugee Voices (2004)

⁷⁷ Ferguson (2011)

⁷⁸ Searle *et al.* (2012)

⁷⁹ Ostry (2009)

⁸⁰ Searle *et al.* (2012)

Agency staff who help refugee-background people to find employment in Auckland and Hamilton explained how challenging the process is. Much of their work involved outreach to employers as they tried to convince them of the value in hiring their clients. One activist who migrated from South Sudan nine years ago said he spent hours of his work weeks (largely unpaid) explaining the refugee journey to potential employers:

“I tell them and I also tell those in our communities. These people have refugee backgrounds. Once they are accepted by the Government of New Zealand to settle here, they are no longer refugees. They have a new home. They are new Kiwis, and they should be treated just like any Kiwi. We help the refugee-background youth with training to be confident at their jobs and to do them well.”

A scholar interviewed for this report agreed with this assertion, labelling as “poisonous discourse” the connotations surrounding words such as “refugee” and “asylum seeker”:

“What kind of words come to mind? Boats and trauma or camps, destitution, despair, deviance, disturbance. Why would employers want to hire traumatised, deviant people? Why would neighbours want to be engaged with people who were ‘queue jumpers’? People who ‘made up their stories’?”

Discrimination and racism factor into the challenges former refugees face when seeking skilled employment in New Zealand. A former refugee woman from South Africa, working part-time in an intermediate school, had this to say about her job-seeking experience in Hamilton:

“I lived through years of apartheid in South Africa. And yet, here sometimes I feel I have regressed. I have seven diplomas and a graduate degree from a New Zealand university. And yet, I have struggled to find work. I only got this part-time job because I volunteered here all last year. My heart aches for these Black children who arrive here young and go through all their school years here and finish university but still can’t get jobs.”

Two highly qualified Black refugee-background men I met had created their own jobs in working with new refugee entrants. One was a highly successful businessman in his native country in Africa. Here he has created space to help refugee youth and to assist adults with employment. He is the leader of a 24-agency network that assists refugees. Yet, he has only been able to get government grant money for two days/week pay for these duties so takes extra jobs to supplement his family’s income.

Some refugees were employed in high-skilled occupations prior to becoming refugees, including positions as teachers, health care workers, filmmakers, and businesspeople. Studies indicate that skilled migrants have difficulties obtaining similar jobs in new countries of residence. A Norwegian scholar found that skilled migrants were confronted by the same kinds of problems evidenced in New Zealand (and the United States): degrees from outside the country were disregarded, skilled workers could only find unskilled jobs, and “work that no other Norwegian workers wanted to do.”⁸¹ Some were told they would have to return to school in Norway and begin the certification process over again, something they found difficult to do given

⁸¹ Fosslund (2013), p. 278.

insufficient funding. Women had greater difficulties than men. Faced with the difficulties of entering the labour market while simultaneously trying to learn a new language and culture, some abandoned their career aspirations to become mothers. One woman who agree to take a part-time job stated:

“It’s easy to get a job if you think that any job will do, because there is a need for us in the health care sector. With a part-time job it’s easier to be available to my family. But there was no time left to improve my language. I started on this course, but I had to quit because my work and family took all my time.”⁸²

Regarding support to gaining employment, it is apparent that the new Strategy attempts to address some of the former refugees’ concerns. Refugee-background research participants indicated that they wanted help in gaining work experience, having access to targeted employment services, more educational support, helping young people to find jobs, and employer education. A programme for which several refugee agency staff expressed positive outcomes is one that has just been rolled out with the new Red Cross contract, called Pathways to Employment. Until recently available at only some Red Cross locations, it has become a part of services at all Red Cross Refugee Services agencies from 1 July 2014. The programme is designed to help former refugees develop their step-by-step employment goals, help them gain English skills, provide information on job training services, assist with writing CVs and application letters, and more, as well as encouraging employers to hire those with refugee backgrounds.

There is a similar programme for refugee youth, Career Pathways, funded by the MOE Refugee Flexible Funding, which is available at some secondary schools and agencies. Two secondary schools I visited did not have sufficient resources to offer Career Pathways information and counselling, but a third was beginning to offer the programme, which was appreciated by their refugee-background students and parents. Given that implementation of the resettlement Strategy is early in the process, it can be hoped that this tool will receive sufficient funding and be implemented in combination with other needs and goals of successful resettlement. Such programmes, accessible to all refugee-background residents who are ready to begin work, would go far in facilitating the umbrella goal of the Strategy for self-sufficiency and social participation. Again, however, communication of such a strategy needs to be more clear, because at present, too many agency staff feel that both they and their refugee-background clients feel pressure for the former refugees to take whatever work is offered. New in the MRRC curriculum is a discussion of consequences to former refugees if they do not accept any job offered that they are deemed by Work and Income New Zealand (WINS) to be capable of doing. Somewhat ironically, also added to the new curriculum are several barriers that work applicants will face, particularly the need to speak English.⁸³

The United States, as mentioned earlier in this report, has long advocated employment as the priority goal in refugee resettlement. In a qualitative study of 24 Bosnians who had financially satisfying jobs before resettlement in the United States, most of the participants were disillusioned with the difference between their resettlement expectations and the reality of integrating into US society.⁸⁴ None knew English prior

⁸² *Idem*, p. 280

⁸³ Hartley (2013), Appendix 10, 1.4 and 1.6

⁸⁴ Ives (2007)

to resettlement, and they described poorly structured English language programmes that grouped people together who were of different levels and abilities. Classes were often repetitive as newcomers joined the programme, and they did not teach the participants the business language they needed to regain types of employment they held in Bosnia. Poorly designed classes resulted from the lack of funding from government agencies.

Although 20 of the 24 participants in Ives' study were employed, over half were working in jobs requiring low or no skills. These caused stress because such employment is related to high redundancy rates in the US. Many worked two or more jobs to gain financial comfort at the sake of losing time for family or relaxation. Many lacked health insurance (the US does not have socialised healthcare); most who were insured felt motivated to remain in low-skill jobs with little potential for advancement simply to keep the insurance. They also felt unable to participate in American culture or to gain job mobility due to their English skills. Ives cites policy problems with multiple government sectors and local agencies involved in financing programmes, resulting in confusion and poor oversight. The contradiction between government priority of employment and language serving as a gatekeeper for skilled jobs serves to threaten long-term self-sufficiency, "miring refugees in low-paying employment with little job security or opportunities for advancement."⁸⁵ Ives also advocated for increased funding for programmes that facilitate social inclusion, as positive interactions between resettled refugees and Americans can also create networks for better employment possibilities.

In a quantitative study comparing refugee employment to that of other migrants in the United States, Connor (2010) found that refugees are as likely to be employed as other migrants. However, there are disparities in occupational levels and wages. He noted that most immigrants have time to consider and prepare for the move before migrating. They can study English before arrival, for instance, and gather important papers regarding their educational preparation and certifications. Connor found that education, English language ability, and neighbourhood contexts were prominent in explaining the employment gap between the two groups. He also concluded that, to his surprise, health and family situations also explain the gap in employment level and income. The better the health and wellbeing, education, English language skills, and even the neighbourhood of residence, the better the prospects for refugees to acquire skilled, well-paying employment. This, too, indicates the importance of restructuring the priorities of the New Zealand Strategy.

At the June 2014 events at Parliament commemorating World Refugee Day, a refugee-background Chin woman spoke proudly about beginning a new job. This celebration, however, followed several years of her feeling lost in New Zealand as an asylum seeker struggling with language and with finding basic needs for survival. Her words described the importance of putting health, support, and language learning first.

National agencies and international reports provide refugee comments about their feelings when they are employed in work that they find meaningful. They appreciate paying for their families' needs, indicate they feel better than when they are sitting idle, and sense that their work allows them to give back to the country that gave them a second chance at life. They have feelings of accomplishment and purpose. Refugee-background participants in a Changemakers 2012 report also felt as though they were

⁸⁵ *Idem*, p. 60

ambassadors for the resettled refugee community in general, as they could demonstrate that former refugees could contribute to New Zealand rather than be a drag on the economy.⁸⁶ Such opportunities have not come easily to refugee-background individuals in New Zealand historically. Better preparation of former refugees in all of their life needs and goals, along with education of employers, is required for unemployment and underemployment to change. Several agency participants in this study indicated that the Pathway to Employment programme was useful in overcoming obstacles. Now that it will be available through all Red Cross resettlement programmes, it will be important to track differences as recent refugee-background adults enter the programme.

Research indicates the importance of health, both prior to employment and on-the-job. It also explains the disadvantages of taking jobs before acquiring a fairly fluent literacy level in English, especially for those arriving with or capable of skilled employment. There are cases in which employers have successfully integrated work with language learning opportunities for migrants and former refugees, but more frequent are instances in which refugee-background employees must forfeit English classes because they interfere with their work hours. This evidence leads to the next chapter of this analysis, the importance of education, which includes the acquisition of English language skills.

⁸⁶ Changemakers (2012)

3 EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND PRACTICE

A young, highly accomplished Kurdish refugee related her love of learning during her time of displacement. Saana said that her education included times of interruption when her family hid in caves in northern Iraq, and when UN funding ran out and her family could not pay for schooling in Iran and Pakistan. She narrated a time when she awoke before dawn and ran off to her school in Pakistan, hoping the school would allow her in. Her mother was frightened that she had been abducted, but found her that afternoon, happily situated in the school. The headmaster decided to give her one free term in the school because she was such a promising student. During her years prior to resettlement, Saana became fluent in Arabic, Farsi, and Urdu.

Saana and her family were processed into the United States, nine years after beginning their refugee journey, and were resettled in Clarkston, Georgia, a resettlement community just outside Atlanta. She relayed the experience of her first day in a US school:

“I did not know any English. Still, the teacher made me take a history quiz. On my first day! Somehow I guessed and got two answers right. He never tried to find out why I failed. Some kids rolled up balls of paper and threw them at me. They pointed at my headscarf and laughed. I could not tell them why it was important that I wear it. I went home that day and said, ‘Mom! Dad! I quit! I’m not going back to school.’”

Of course, Saana did return to school, and four years later, she graduated at the top of her secondary school, winning honours that included a four-year scholarship to a private women’s university. She majored as a pre-med student, and she received an internship to work at the internationally known Centre for Disease Control (CDC). Saana met and married a Kurdish man, also a resettled refugee, and the couple now have three children. They reside in a southern state, where Saana works as a research assistant at the highly recognised university. She became a United States citizen several years ago.

A highly accomplished young Bosnian woman has a similar story. Her family fled during the war and were allowed to reside in Germany for three years. They were then given the choice to return to Bosnia or resettle in the United States. Jasenka was eight years old when she began school in the United States, also in Clarkston. She now has her Master’s degree in education from the University of Georgia and plans to return for her doctorate. Jasenka was awarded the 2006 Hitachi Foundation National Award for Exemplary Community Service, and she was invited to be a national spokesperson for the Run for Darfur rally held in Washington, DC. She is currently an elementary school teacher. She and this author have co-published an academic journal article on refugee research.

Jasenka, too, has a traumatic tale about her first year in a US school. The teacher, well intended, believed that Jasenka might feel more comfortable if grouped with three other refugee-background students from Bosnia. It had not occurred to her that Bosnian refugees came from ethnicities at war with one another. When the three girls discovered that Jasenka had a Christian mother, they began to call her names in Bosnian and bully her. Jasenka began to feign illness in order to stay home from school. When her mother found out the truth of the situation, she arranged for meetings with the teacher and principal. Though this incident happened five years before Jasenka related the story, she could still not withhold her tears.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, too many citizens lack knowledge that would help them understand refugee experiences and needs. Proper teacher training, along with an internationalised curriculum, could prevent cruel incidents such as these. Unfortunately, teacher training programmes in the United States have no requirement that teacher candidates learn about the refugee experience or particular needs, even though refugees have resettled in every state. Even states that receive the most refugee-background students, such as Texas, California, Georgia, Florida, and Minnesota, have no such requirements. Unless a university professor in a college of education is aware of this need and incorporates it into her course topics, young teachers enter their first classrooms with no knowledge of refugees or their needs. The same is true in New Zealand. Both countries' teacher programmes include an understanding of diversity and multiculturalism, but not specifically about refugee-background students and families. Most teachers interviewed for this report indicated no formal training on working with refugee-background students. They gain it on the job or after they confront issues while teaching resettled refugee students that cause them to seek help. However, unlike their US counterparts, New Zealand teachers are informed in advance when they will be receiving refugee-background students into their classrooms. American teachers only know who in their classes is eligible for ESOL classes.

For adult learners, English must almost always be treated as a separate subject, as academic and vocational courses at tertiary institutions are in English. For adults who will not go on for further education, a working knowledge of English is needed to acquire even a low-level job and to be confident to go into the community to access daily needs, such as buying groceries, sending mail, meeting children's teachers, and understanding their own medical appointments. The United States has some ethnic enclaves of Spanish, Chinese, Hmong, and other cultures that are large enough to support residential jobs and services in their first languages. This is far less common in New Zealand, however. Current challenges for refugee-background residents trying to attend ELL classes include childcare, schedules, interruptions by WINZ staff during their ELL classes, finances, and transportation.

This chapter compares educational practices in the United States and New Zealand with respect to former refugees. Findings are a result of qualitative research methods resulting from the author's work in two major resettlement areas in the South-eastern United States and five major resettlement areas in New Zealand. Details of the methods and procedures are in Appendix 2. The intent is to examine the translation of policy into practice and to reflect on how those policies support or detract from the realities of refugee-background residents' experiences.

English: The Subject or the Medium?

Obviously, in order to learn academic subject matter in New Zealand and US public schools, students must know English, as it is the medium of instruction. How to acquire the language in school settings has long been a matter of debate. New Zealand has three official languages – English, Māori, and New Zealand Sign Language. The bicultural nature of New Zealand society may reduce the bias towards ELL students in educational settings. The United States has no official language, but since at least the 1920s, xenophobic attitudes towards international languages have caused state

attempts to limit non-English languages for instruction.⁸⁷ This issue has spawned court cases throughout the twentieth century, and there are still advocacy groups for an “English only” movement that would cut funding for other language support. Some of the early cases involved new immigrant groups trying to implement bilingual instruction so that students did not fall behind in their academic studies while they worked at learning English.

Arguments involve methods of language instruction and the proper locations for language instruction. Methods of English language learning include various types of bilingual education or “English immersion”. In bilingual instruction, two languages are used to teach the academic curriculum. It can be one way instruction, in which only one group is learning bilingually (for instance, Chinese students learning in Mandarin and English, while the English-speaking students in the room do not learn the Chinese language); or two-way bilingual education, in which all students gain proficiency in both languages of instruction. One-way bilingual instruction, the most typical model in the United States, can be used as a transitional method, in which the goal is to shift the students from their native language to English and to assimilate them to the majority language and culture. Two-way bilingual instruction allows all students to develop and maintain minority languages, strengthening cultural plurality at the school and community level.⁸⁸ In “English immersion”, learners are expected to learn academic subjects in English. This process can vary from a combination of some language learning (usually in classes designed specifically for ELLs), to an extreme of 100 per cent immersion (also called “sink or swim” by critics).

Related to these methods are the places in which the instruction occurs. Some argue that separate classes are best for ELLs, which fits well with a one-way bilingual method of instruction. Proponents of immersion strategies would argue that language minority students need to be in classes with native-born peers to learn the language more quickly and to assimilate to the culture of the school and society. US schools with sufficient populations of non-native English speakers tend to combine both methods, using some “pull-out” time for teaching English, and placing the students in regular classrooms for some of their academic subjects or just for “non-academic” subjects such as physical education, music, and art, until they gain a level of fluency in English.

The 1974 Supreme Court case *Lau v Nichols* ruled against the San Francisco School district argument that placing Chinese speaking students in all regular classrooms was equal treatment for all students. The Court argued that same treatment is not necessarily equal treatment, as “students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education.” Within the same year, Congress forwarded the Equal Educational Opportunities Act which mandates, among other provisions, that educational agencies must take appropriate actions to help students overcome language barriers they may have in the instructional programmes. Since that time, cases have both supported and challenged the *Lau* decision. Opponents to the case often argue that because there is no Constitutional right to an education, it follows that there is no Constitutional right to a bilingual education. There is no uniform process to help language minority students learn English in the

⁸⁷ See *Meyers v. Nebraska* (1923), *Farrington v. Tokushige* (1927), and *Stainbeck v. Mo Hock Ke Kok Po* (1947)

⁸⁸ Cerda, Natalie, and Hernandez, M. (2006)

United States, and depending on state politics, practices vary from highly supportive methods to immersion as the primary recourse. There is also debate between minority language parents regarding what is best for their children. Some care deeply that their children maintain their native language and aspects of their culture as they learn English and become American; others believe their children's best hope for the future is to assimilate as quickly as possible, gradually losing their native identity.

One state, New York, published the most robust policy statement in the United States concerning expectations for English language learners, all who teach ELLs, and administrators of schools with ELL populations in April 2014. The "Blueprint for English Language Learners (ELLs) Success," issued by the NY State Education Department, calls for not only for all teachers to deliver culturally and linguistically appropriate instruction for all diverse learners, but for school boards and school leaders to create "a safe and inclusive learning environment that recognizes and respects the languages and cultures of all students."⁸⁹ Of particular note in this statement are the inclusion of parents and parent learning opportunities, availability for bilingual instruction for *all* students, assistance for maintaining children's first languages, expectations that ELL students also have their psychosocial needs addressed, and the recognition that the languages and cultures of the diverse children can be used as an asset to the learning community. It remains to be seen whether or not the statement will be followed with governmental financial backing that could result in significant teacher training and accountability in practice.

The Zealand MOE has developed a new, uniform measurement to chart primary-secondary school ELL progress that is currently being adopted throughout the country. The old system used a three-point scale to measure listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Because it did not have a consistent methodology for helping teachers determine their ratings, the MOE found problems with over-grading. This resulted in placing students in higher levels of English usage before they were ready to succeed in them.

The English Language Learning Progressions (ELLP) provide teachers with matrices for listening, speaking, reading, and writing at five stages, foundational through Stage 4. The matrix for each component of understanding and using English is broken into parts, and each matrix contains exemplars for all the levels and components.⁹⁰ The ELLP resulted from over four years of research and two pilot tests (first with 32 schools, then 200, or one-quarter of all NZ schools). Schools have until the end of 2014 to begin using the new system if they want to continue their governmental funding for ESOL classes. The Progressions emphasise that a teacher's score must reflect consistent, independent achievement at each level. Numerous assessments are used to determine each student's level, such as observations, ongoing student work, and achievement tests. ESOL teachers I have spoken to are happy with the new programme and assessment tools.

Corresponding with the Progress Reports is a series of modules provided by the MOE on ESOL Online. These independent study modules explain how the ELLP fits with the New Zealand curriculum and NCEA levels. ESOL Online provides a robust resource with examples and suggestions, and it uses the Cummins' theories of basic

⁸⁹ New York State Education Department (2014), p. 2

⁹⁰ The 'ELLP Record of Progress' and matrices are available as a download at the MOE website, <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/>.

interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP).⁹¹ In brief, BICS is peer-level conversational fluency acquired in one to three years whereas CALP requires higher levels of academic language along with contextual understanding. On average, it takes students five to seven years to achieve this level of language proficiency. Thus, refugee-background students resettled during their primary years are more likely to catch up with their New Zealand-born peers by intermediate or secondary years than those arriving in their teens or young adulthood. Not only is vocabulary more complex, but more context has already been acquired by older New Zealand-born students. Newly arrived secondary students and adults need the most help with language vocabulary and skills if they are to move on to tertiary education and/or acquire skilled jobs.

New Zealand provides financial assistance to schools based on the number of refugee-background (and immigrant and international) students requiring ELL classes and their level of proficiency. Some language assistance, however, is confusing, especially for older students, with the result that the students draw from time-limited funding pools that terminate before they acquire sufficient language skills to begin tertiary education. Families receive benefits based on how many children they have attending school, along with other criteria. There is, however, a student allowance that is typically accessed at age 18 to move onto tertiary education, along with a 200 week tertiary entitlement. Some teachers counsel secondary students to apply for their allowance early, as it tends to provide more money overall to the family. However, this often causes students to use up their allowance on ESOL classes, with the result that they do not have enough financial assistance for courses of study at vocational schools or universities. This problem could be relieved by more funding to train education counsellors (both at schools and social service agencies) needed to help students understand the funding policies.

Other Student Success Factors

An MBIE 2011 budget estimate indicated that there is funding behind the MOE goal: education is the highest refugee resettlement cost, at \$17.8 million over a three year time period. To understand factors that can increase refugee-background students' ability to achieve, policymakers must consider factors attributed to student academic success, most particularly, those that can be influenced by policy (as opposed to, for example, cognitive ability).^{92,93} Given the importance of this topic, factors of student success have been studied over many decades. Factors that directly correlate to priorities in the new Refugee Resettlement Strategy and MOE policies include the following:

- Self-sufficiency
 - Economic opportunities for students' families
 - Access to child care and after school programmes
 - Family income level
- Participation
 - Culturally friendly environments

⁹¹ Cummins (2009)

⁹² Anderson (2013)

⁹³ Gomez *et al.* (2013)

- Access to libraries and other institutions that support learning
- Health and Wellbeing
 - Access to health and social services
- Education
 - High expectations for student achievement
 - A rigorous curriculum
 - Safe schools
 - Cultural sensitivity
 - Teacher preparation
 - Adequate materials and resources
 - Parent involvement in learning
- Housing
 - Safe communities

Sufficient economic levels and job security allow parents to spend time with their children. A frequent consequence of low pay is that children spend hours at home with no adult supervision, as mentioned by the teacher comment in Chapter 2, and children must tend to household tasks that reduce their time for homework. Part-time work during out-of-school hours creates similar problems. Child development research indicates that children use the amygdala portion of the brain, the part that responds without rational thought; and that teens are transitioning to using their frontal cortex, or that part responsible for rational thinking. Additionally, especially during adolescence, teens are susceptible to peer pressure as they confront parental authority. Responsible parenting puts the parents or guardians in the role of their children's frontal cortex until they can take more responsibility for themselves. Unsupervised children have more opportunities to act on poor social decisions, such as ignoring homework, using illegal drugs, drinking alcoholic beverages, or joining gangs.^{94,95,96} Sufficient income can allow parents to pay for childcare when they must work. Informed communities (discussed in Chapter 4) can create welcoming neighbourhoods where refugee-background children and families feel valued, increasing their interest in social participation and school achievement. Safe communities are more likely to provide welcoming spaces than those with high crime rates and dangerous streets.

Success factors within the educational sector have much to do with teacher training. Without courses addressing multiculturalism and diversity, educators may not have had opportunities to recognise and challenge their own preconceptions that can lead to lower expectations for minority and ELL students. They may be unaware of how to create rigorous curricula and expectations for these children.⁹⁷ Ibrahim pointed out that low student achievement is often compounded by lack of understanding between parents and schools, due to major differences in lifestyle, culture, and beliefs.⁹⁸ In examining the case of Somali refugee families in Christchurch, he explained that

⁹⁴ Alleyne and Wood (2014)

⁹⁵ Yiu and Gottfredson (2014)

⁹⁶ Unger *et al.* (2014)

⁹⁷ Bhopal and Rhamie (2014)

⁹⁸ Ibrahim, Hassan (2012)

school personnel's lack of knowledge not only about the refugee experience but also of the typical pre-war culture as defined by traditional gender roles, religion, and discipline makes communication and learning challenging. He recommended that cultural liaisons can help to break down misperceptions between refugee groups and teachers.

During interviews I conducted with refugee-background secondary students in the United States, they discussed ongoing perceptions of discrimination not only from US-born peers, but also from teachers. One described a classroom incident in which she was the only one to raise her hand to answer the teacher's question, but she mispronounced the answer. "The teacher was the first one to laugh," she said. Muslim refugee students said they were called terrorists, Hussein's daughter, and bin Laden's wife. They felt stared at and hated after the events of 11 September 2001. "Why did you bomb us?" was a question their US peers would carelessly ask them. Saana described sitting in a history class during which her teacher insisted all Muslims were brainwashed and wanted to take over the world. He would not let her speak her point of view. In this same town, subsequent research found that the use of trained cultural liaisons resulted in more teacher understanding and in more parent participation.⁹⁹

Each of the United States has either anti-bullying laws or policies, and most states have both.¹⁰⁰ However, in practice, research indicates that over half of the incidents go unreported unless the results are dramatic, such as the 2011 event in which a 13-year old Liberian student was beaten savagely and hung by his jacket from a wrought-iron fence. Even this may have gone unpunished if the seven attackers had not videotaped their assault on one of their mobile phones. Victims are often afraid of further retribution if they report their attackers or of being seen as weak and fearful by their peers. Resettled refugees can be afraid that their legal status will be affected when they are not well informed of their rights. Certainly, in cases when teachers are the bullies, the role of power increases the silence of students. There are many anti-bullying programmes used by schools to decrease incidents and provide victims and bystanders with more confidence to report.

Bullying of refugee-background students is also an issue in New Zealand, as demonstrated in research conducted by both the New Zealand Red Cross and Changemakers.^{101,102} The Red Cross report indicated that bullying of refugee-background youth was widespread, causing students to fear for their physical safety. Students also noted disrespect for teachers and school property, something they had not encountered in their homelands. The Changemakers report describes a project in which Wellington refugee-background youth used dramatic arts to illustrate how deeply bullying affects them. African refugee students said they were called "niggers." When students tried to explain the problem to their parents, the parents did not understand, because bullying was not an issue in their homelands. Students were confused, because the custom in their homeland communities was to welcome people from other countries. They recognised that bullying was used for social power and control. It made them feel as though they did not belong, and in some cases, made students contemplate suicide. Both the Human Rights Commission and the Ministry

⁹⁹ McBrien and Ford (2012)

¹⁰⁰ US Department of Health and Human Services, stopbullying.gov (n.d.)

¹⁰¹ New Zealand Red Cross (2014)

¹⁰² Changemakers (2011)

of Education have also published information on the seriousness of bullying.^{103,104} Most of these resources contain information on creating safer schools and communities.

Different Regions, Different Strategies

New Zealand has primarily resettled refugees in six cities: Christchurch and Nelson in the South Island; and Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, and Palmerston North in the North Island. Christchurch has not resettled new quota refugees since the 2010 earthquake, but it still receives those coming on family reunification admissions. Each of these areas has a Regional Migrant and Refugee Education Co-ordinator (one oversees both Hamilton and Christchurch, and one oversees Wellington and Palmerston North). Each region has a distinctive character, posing different opportunities and challenges. Brief overviews and examples follow.

Auckland

The largest city in New Zealand, Auckland resettles the largest number of refugees, 70 per cent according to the Auckland Refugee Community Coalition (ARCC).¹⁰⁵ It is also the region that houses the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre in one of its suburbs. Beyond an Auckland placement for some former refugees completing their arrival period at MRRC, a number migrate back to Auckland after initial settlement in one of the other five areas. Refugee-background residents give numerous reasons for doing so; more resources, more ethnic communities and networks, and more employment opportunities are frequently cited reasons.

Given the population, Auckland has two regional refugee educational coordinators. There is also a large number of community agencies that provide various services including English language learning, employment help, counselling services, youth resources, and community affairs. ARCC is a coalition of 23 registered refugee community organisations representing 12 different countries.

Auckland has many schools spread throughout its districts that have populations of refugee students. The Mangere Centre is where all quota refugees receive their first educational experience in New Zealand. It provides newcomer refugees with their first glimpse of New Zealand life and sets the stage for their expectations and hopes. Staff give careful attention to every detail, from decorating classrooms with materials, words, and items from the former refugees' homelands to meeting participants' needs. One example can be seen in the infants' room for napping. The government required Western-type baby cots with the bars around the sides, but most mothers dislike the cots, saying they remind them of cages. So, among the regulation cots are options preferred and used by the mothers. The pre-schoolers often prefer tying a baby doll around themselves with a wide scarf rather than putting them in toy prams, because in their culture, mothers don't use strollers or prams. A teacher explained that children not only need literacy and numeracy skills but also practical cultural skills they try to provide before the children are resettled in the community where they may be embarrassed by their mistakes. Examples given included learning how to hold a pencil, how to use scissors, and which clothes are appropriate to wear to school and

¹⁰³ Human Rights Commission (2009)

¹⁰⁴ MOE (2013)

¹⁰⁵ ARCC website

outside. Because they had often struggled with food, she had to instruct the children not to store food or eat sparsely; there would be enough food for all the next day.

All the staff works to make the rooms feel comfortable and welcoming by having appropriately sized furniture and providing materials that are familiar along with items that will be new to the former refugees. Careful explanations are provided to parents so that they can feel safe about their children while they are left in the hands of strangers.

The new service mix at MRRC is based on the “Government desire [for] stronger focus on employment services during this stage and this is a key priority for future orientation”¹⁰⁶ In examining the mix to be delivered at MRRC, in particular the curriculum, most changes have occurred in the adult education with the many hours of employment-related classes added. Section 1.4 under Self-sufficiency in Appendix 10 indicates, however, why other priorities should precede seeking employment:

- Communication in English is “essential”
- Trades people “must be registered and trained”
- Employers want people who can work “without a lot of training, work without close supervision”
- “Workers who will fit in with the existing workforce”.¹⁰⁷

These employer expectations demonstrate why former refugees need time to learn English, learn the culture of New Zealand, and have time to gain New Zealand credentials and experience for jobs they may have done in their home countries. According to some refugee-background adults and agency personnel I interviewed, new and stricter regulations from WINZ penalise adults who do not take jobs they are offered, similarly to the United States.

In addition to two visits to the Mangere Centre, I visited three secondary schools in different areas of the city. One school I visited offered a full-service educational setting during its daytime classes. In addition to enrolling refugee-background children and providing the ELLP curriculum, it also had several classrooms for adult English language learners. The majority were women and mothers. To make it possible for these women to attend, the school provided an early childcare centre throughout the day. The women went to the childcare centre for tea breaks to spend time with their children, and they could be easily accessed in classes if a child needed their attention.

The coordinator explained the detail with which this centre was designed. The young children were not simply babysat, but they had a range of activities that were at once playful and instructional. The women could relax knowing that they could visit their babies and preschool children as needed while their older children were learning in their classrooms. The coordinator discussed the funding challenges, as different funding pools could only be used for specific services. However, through careful channelling of resources and thoughtful planning, the school provided whole-family educational services that allowed the adults to network and learn from one another.

Another valuable asset of the school was its arts curriculum. The school was known for a multitude of arts programmes, and staff found that refugee-background and New

¹⁰⁶ Hartley (2013)

¹⁰⁷ *Idem.*

Zealand-born students came to know one another and appreciate each other through the arts – painting, drama, and music. I found this in the United States as well when I created a photo project for refugee-background youth in which they were able to share their favourite photos with the larger community.

At another secondary school I visited, I was able to have a discussion with eight of the refugee-background students at an all-girls school. The girls were attentive and ambitious about their life goals. They were happy about the MOE goal because they wanted to know that someone was watching after them and supporting them if they fell behind. During the conversation, I learned that the school did not have its own bilingual liaisons but that other schools shared resources and they also called on ethnic communities for help as needed. Although the girls liked the idea of the MOE goal, teachers concurred that it was a bad idea. At the third school I visited, the ESOL coordinator of 10 years' experience said:

“I think it's problematic. I can kind of see why they're [MOE] doing it, but in terms of students from a refugee background who have not got that uninterrupted educational background to peg everything else to, they need to have the time to learn at the level they need as opposed to the pressure and accountability to show that x number of refugee students got 14 more credits in this course. Some of them are able to achieve this. But with the vast majority in the ESOL programme we get so busy having to get them those extra credits that sometimes we're not paying attention to their actual needs.”

This teacher was also concerned with the refugee-background students getting hurt by gang activity in the neighbourhood, domestic violence within refugee homes, lack of bilingual liaisons, and the children's lack of self-esteem, especially when they were in low-level English progressions. She did acknowledge that sports provided a way in which the refugee-background students integrated with New Zealanders and could feel accomplished, and she noted some high academic achievers.

Overall, the three schools were diverse and had individual ways of working with their refugee-background populations, unlike places like Christchurch and Nelson, which will be described below.

Christchurch

As mentioned, Christchurch refugee resettlement has stopped, aside from family reunification, since the first major earthquake in 2010. There were hopes that the city would reopen to resettlement by the end of 2014, but latest indications are that this will not occur before 2016. Still, there is a large refugee community in Christchurch and its environs. The effects of two major earthquakes have had psychosocial repercussions not only for the refugee community, but the whole of the area. The protracted duration of clean-up and rebuilding resulting from the damage has heightened levels of stress and stress-related illness for New Zealanders and newcomers alike. Migrant populations of Chinese, Filipino, and Irish have increased to work in rebuilding the city. Because of extensive damage to housing, there is a housing shortage in the city. Streets remain blocked or diverted, and there are many sites where concrete and metal rubble remains in heaps.

Because new quota refugees are not resettling in Christchurch, agencies and schools have experienced cuts to their funding for refugee support. There is funding for new migrants, but the funding is lower than that for resettled refugees. During a tour of the college that is a hub for refugee and migrant education, an ESOL teacher took me into

two adult literacy classes and pointed out that most of the students were migrants who moved to work on rebuilding Christchurch. Regular education classes, however, still contained numerous refugee-background students. I visited one science class. En route, my guide was confronted by two refugee students who said they needed to leave early. They demonstrated some of the complexities for the school. One, under 16, was told he needed to wait until the end of the school day as he did not have a written note from a parent (he said his mother needed to use his bicycle). The other, in a work study programme, was told that he needed to work with the employer so he would not miss his studies, as he was only at the school three days each week. When he left, the coordinator explained that he was actually there on his own, because he had been abandoned by his guardian upon arrival. "He came here with a 12-year old's passport. He's not 12, obviously."

I also spoke at length with the after-school coordinator and a young refugee-background woman working on her master's degree in psychology who helped at the after-school centre. The coordinator showed me through the various after-school classrooms designated for primary through adult classes. Unlike many situations I have observed in the United States, these sections were overseen by classroom teachers and bilingual aides. Volunteers were included as helpers, but they were not the primary tutors.

Funding was from various sources, including the MOE (Flexible Funding) and a local agency. Cooking and language classes for adults ran concurrently, so that adults were learning along with their children.

I talked to the coordinator of the programme about school life in general at this highly diverse school. She did say there was some prejudice and that Muslim girls wearing scarves were targeted. However, she also explained that this school chose not to have uniforms in order to respect the various cultures' attires. But she stated that because a central value of the school was to respect diversity, the New Zealand-born students would interact with the refugee-background students, though it was harder for those in language intensive courses.

Of all my interviews, the one with the graduate student was the most compelling. She has lived in New Zealand for 12 years, so she has gone from intermediate through graduate school here. K was a highly intelligent and thoughtful young woman. She was instrumental in creating the first Youth Fest in Christchurch that occurred in 2014, attracting 4,000 participants. Her idea was to create activities that allowed opportunities for deep discussions between culturally different young people. The festival included music, drama, art displays, dance, and more. She has been engaged with Christchurch and national agencies and ministries as a youth voice for refugees.

K's take on discrimination overlapped with her thoughts on understanding oneself. She felt that everyone was challenged in their youth, and they had to be supported to find themselves and the strength to be who they are. She said that she quickly overcame her feelings of homesickness due to the positive attention given to her by her school and teaching staff. She had praise for her educational experience in Christchurch and believed that New Zealand "made sure to bring extended family as well so we're not isolated." She had bilingual aid support that helped her as she learned English.

At the same time, she had criticisms and offered recommendations for improving youth resettlement. She spoke of her much younger sister who ended up in an all-

white school and was called “Sandy” because of her skin colour. She felt that social studies was poorly taught, because teachers talked about what happened, but not why wars happened or how they were similar. She was quite passionate about more effective means of teaching social studies. K also said she encountered “racist teachers” who taught students to be disrespectful by the behaviours they modelled.

Because of her high participation in school and her community, K was also nominated for special opportunities. She was particularly critical of a leadership programme designed by the Office of Ethnic Affairs, because she felt they selected refugee-background youth who were already succeeding, like herself, when they should be choosing refugee-background youth who needed more encouragement. She reluctantly decided to go along with her selection, but wanted to tell the office that they were going about the programme all wrong. About youth employment, she saw too many of her peers going to Australia because there were more and better paying opportunities there. She suggested more opportunities for youth experience while they were still in school so that they could be competitive after graduation.

The Christchurch experience was one of a centrally located refugee hub for learning, from the youngest through adult education. Refugee-background students and participants came from schools throughout the Christchurch region, and the centre sent bilingual assistance to other schools as needed. The hub model seemed to be working well in this area.

Hamilton

About a 90 minute drive south of Auckland, Hamilton is a vastly different setting from the largest city. The Hamilton-Waikato region is known for agriculture, and the city centre is primarily one long main street (Victoria) that follows the banks of the Waikato River. There is a strong Asian influence, with numerous Thai, Indian, and Chinese restaurants along Victoria Street. However, the downtown area was not filled with pedestrians as is common in Wellington and Auckland, and those present were not very diverse. The latest census data counted ethnicity in the city as 93,315 European, 28,605 Māori, 18,477 Asian, 6,795 Pacific, and 2,628 other (Middle East, Latin America, Africa).

There is not a school that serves as a central hub for refugee-background education as in Christchurch, but there are several agencies that offer after-school homework help and refugee services. The regional refugee forum meets quarterly to voice issues, which are taken to the national annual refugee forum. English language learning was a major topic I heard from those I interviewed in Hamilton, as was its connection with getting jobs. There was frustration about the job market in the region beyond the need for English, with four interviewees stating that the youth would get their education here, then feel forced to leave for Australia where they had better chances to receive employment. Two said that their families would often follow in order to stay together.

Three former refugees indicated underlying issues of stereotyping and discrimination with phrases like “they don’t trust us,” “they are very kind and happy on the outside, but, for example, when we invite them for dinner, they never invite us,” and “they will help you, but when you knock on their door for a job, you can’t get it.” This is where I met the South African woman mentioned earlier in the paper who is highly educated but still not in full-time work and who worried about African children growing up in New Zealand but still unable to receive employment. These examples indicate that New Zealand is losing out on trained and educated refugee-background individuals

because too many New Zealand employers discriminate in terms of employment. This is one reason why a national strategy to help not only refugees, but also nationals learn about the refugee journey and integration is needed.

I observed only one adult English language class in Hamilton, in the evening at a refugee centre. It was sparsely attended, with only four adults in the room. I was unable to stay, as I had an interview to conduct at the centre, but while I was there, the studying was silent with the students working from books. I do not know if conversational work followed. One refugee director I interviewed felt that more needed to be done in terms of English pronunciation. He said that even after years of study, too many resettled refugees lacked courage to speak in public because they were uncertain of pronunciation.

I got to help out at one after-school homework centre, also taking place at a different refugee centre. The children there were hard at work and seemed very pleased to get individualised help. The young boy I helped with math did not want me to leave and asked if I would keep returning. This centre provided transportation to the centre from nearby schools, but the parents had to pick up the children at the end of the time period. This centre also offered numerous programmes for adults, with its most popular being driving classes. The director, a former refugee, also explained the popularity of the computer classes for people coming from countries in which they had no access to them. He explained the need for time in order for refugee newcomers to settle, learn English, and then try to find jobs. In his own experience and in dealing with the resettled refugee population in Hamilton, he believed that they did not want to live off government benefits. But he knew the difficulty in finding work in the region, and he believed there was need for a programme to get refugee-background adults work experience in New Zealand before they attempted to find paid work.

A third staff manager I interviewed in Hamilton felt that, in comparison with a European resettlement country she visited, New Zealand was doing much better in terms of discrimination. Her biggest worries for the population fell in the areas of employment needs, English learning, and youth. She acknowledged that employment was needed and wanted by the refugee communities, but felt that the government Strategy about work was unrealistic and placed too much stress on people who were already coping with enormous stress: “The ones who are ready for work, if there’s support and resources for them to do it, that’s fantastic! The others don’t need to be focused on work at the moment. They just need to be focused on health issues.” She was concerned about the curriculum changes at Mangere, stating that many people who would go quickly into employment did not have to be spending time writing a CV, as they would not need one to work as a cleaner or stacking shelves. Regarding employment counselling in the settlement period, she felt that too many received poor information or not enough information, explaining that many pursued paths that did not offer much in terms of employment vacancies, or they might go into the wrong kind of education needed for their goals. She felt they need to get good advice, early on. That seems to be the intent of the Pathways to Employment programme that the Red Cross will be using, so one can hope this situation will improve.

Regarding English, her concern was that the government needed to fund vocational English classes if it wants former refugees to get employment. This was similar to what I learned in Wellington about the government funding English for Work, but only for those who were already employed. She also recognised that “about 80 per cent of our clients are below conversational English making it difficult for them to

understand basic employment issues such as contracts or health and safety rules. She discussed challenges or competing priorities:

“We have people dying to work and we can’t find them placements, so they have to take the government benefit. And there are responsibilities that go with that. So they need to attend employment workshops, for example, but there are not interpreters. Or they need to see their caseworker on a regular basis which means they have to leave their English class.”

Regarding youth, this employee expressed concern that they receive almost no attention in the new Strategy. She felt that important options for them, such as the Youth Career Pathways programme was either underfunded or underutilised. She was concerned that they did not have enough assistance in terms of bilingual liaison hours, and that bullying was a major issue for many of the youth.

Another at the agency felt that the consultation process was problematic, stating that:

“the MBIE invited communities to come and hear about their new Strategy. They went through the key goals, and the community went, ‘Yeah, we want that!’ But they didn’t break down what that actually meant in terms of what was expected to get there. I felt like I was sitting there listening to two conversations. They are agreeing but about two completely different things.”

The master ESOL teacher I was privileged to observe and interview at an intermediate school learned her successful methods through years of teaching and evaluating what worked. She liked the new ELLP lessons and matrices provided by the MOE but explained that progress was sometimes hard to quantify, especially if it was slow, such as a preliterate child being able to form complete sentences only after two years of study. Although the school had two bilingual liaisons employed as well as teacher aides, she said that most of the time, the children sat in mainstreamed classes and did not well understand what their teacher was saying. This teacher was greatly involved with supporting the wellbeing of all her students and kept careful folders of each one’s progression, whether refugee, migrant, or international students. She had many wall hangings about working together and all belonging together. She told me that the school staff was also multicultural, and she was unaware of issues of discrimination among the children at the school.

Nelson

A small city in the northwest corner of the South Island, Nelson is known for its sunshine, beauty, and fishing industry. Many refugee-background men work at a large fishery in the area. The largest population of refugee-background residents in Nelson is a Chin population.

Nelson’s refugee education coordinator also oversees the Christchurch area. He has contributed to a similar model in Nelson, especially for primary and intermediate refugee-background students in the area of Victory Village. This small community has a community hub at an elementary school that creates a family-centred resource including health, adult education, and recreation. The central location for education and family services developed in the 1990s when the primary school recognised a need to improve its learning environment and connect more to the community. Stuart’s case study on the changed approach and health services-education partnership documented high engagement by the community, increasing parental involvement,

reducing turnover in the school over 50 per cent in a nine-year period and increasing positive community experiences¹⁰⁸

The intermediate school is a short walk down the street, so bilingual liaisons can easily move between the two schools. I spoke with two of these liaisons as we walked between the two schools. They were satisfied with their jobs and enjoyed being able to work with the age range of students they helped. The ESOL director at the primary school had more time for an interview. She explained some of the processes the community hub used to welcome new refugee-background families, beginning with meeting them at the Nelson airport to bring them to their new home. She wished they knew more than three weeks in advance of new arrivals so they could prepare more fully. I assured her that three weeks is quite wonderful, especially in comparison with the United States, when schools receive no notice and teachers are not told anything about new students' backgrounds except whether or not they will need ELL classes. In the Nelson schools, advance preparations include insuring that the new child will have a desk, files, coat holder, and supplies ready. The teacher will have received non-confidential information about the child and family so that she can be ready with a greeting in the child's own language. They plan for a child in class to buddy with the newcomer, and the students may learn something about the new student's home country. The ESOL director had posters around her room and also distributed them to classroom teachers with words for "hello" in many languages.

Because the school was 25 per cent foreign-born, the teachers chose to include ESOL as a curricular subject, with the result that more teachers were learning about the ELLP and receiving cultural training. The school had five bilingual liaisons and two bilingual volunteers, more than other schools I visited. However, none of these positions was full time, so there were gaps when there was no language help available for students at early levels of English learning. The ESOL director herself explained that she picked up much of her own training by trial and error, but that she also took a course from time to time over the years and had a TESOL certification from Australia. She was positive about the community hub concept.

There are also several preschools within easy access of the primary and intermediate schools. I met a preschool teacher at one who impressed me greatly with her reflective practice. She kept a journal in which she wrote about what happened during the day, followed by her reflections on the actions. For some days she reflected on a Chin girl, "M" and her father. The girl had missed the teacher when she was away at a professional training workshop and followed the teacher around the next day. The following day, the teacher called out "hello!" in Chin to the father and daughter, and she had a brief conversation with them in Chin that she had learned. Again, the girl followed her, and she tended to provide the girl with materials at the various play stations. In her reflections, she wrote:

"I wonder what would have happened if I had not called out to the family. Who would the father have 'given' M to? After reading what I wrote about the day, I realised that I gave M items for various activities, attempting to engage M where I needed to be. What does M like to do? What are her interests?"

¹⁰⁸ Stuart, D. (2010)

The teacher's journal was filled with incidents about the children and their families, and her reflections demonstrated the profound care and attention she gave to her behaviours to constantly improve her practice.

The secondary schools accommodating boys and girls were separate-sex schools. I visited the girls' school and met with the ESOL coordinator. She was working hard to maintain an after-school homework help centre. However, she was having difficulty getting the refugee-background boys to come to the girls' school library to participate. I wondered if a family-style after-school centre might help boost attendance as it did at the three other hub schools I visited.

I spoke to two teachers, both from South Africa, who had many refugee-background students in their classes. With their perspective and the contrast they drew from apartheid days in South Africa, neither felt there was discrimination at the school. One said:

“When they move into the classes, the Kiwi girls are very keen to sit with them. I've never had these girls sit on their own. A girl would go next to them. That's just the thing they do. After a while, they make friends. But totally natural. Not, ‘Oh, I feel so sorry for this girl. I'm going to sit next to her.’ Nothing like that. I've never felt that I've had to coax this.”

He explained that he thought New Zealand culture and social history made integration better than it was in other countries in which he had lived. Regarding the MOE goal, one of the teachers said it was “very noble” but did not believe the girls would reach that percentage. The reason?:

“Again, language. Not because of intelligence. Even with maths, lots of language comes into it. They're intelligent enough. They just need more time because of the language catch-up. I would put in more hours for English learning. And for the parents, too. We all look up to our parents, but it's a problem if they can say, ‘My parents don't speak English, and they're okay. I'll be okay too.’”

I spoke with two focus groups of Chin students for a total of 14. Their interests ranged from studying science to fashion design. Most of the students felt they were on track to reach NCEA Level 2 or 3. They described various opportunities to get support they needed, such as the homework help centre, an academic committee of peer tutors, and supportive teachers. They also stated that it was their responsibility to ask for help. Very few were involved in extracurricular school activities, but they stated they were involved in their churches and Chin communities. It was unfortunate that I did not have time to visit the boys' school, as the comparison could have been insightful.

Wellington

The capital city is a diverse region, known for its arts, politics, and wind. The region covered by the Regional Refugee and Migrant Educational Coordinator for Wellington extends to Upper Hutt, Hutt City, Palmerston North, and as far north as Taranaki. The Coordinator explained that a central hub, such as that in Christchurch, was not practical for so large a region. As a result, schools with populations of 10 or more refugee-background students attempted to create after-school homework help for refugee students that allowed students from nearby schools with smaller populations to attend as well. There are also some community agencies that offered help, such as the Somali Homework Help Centre in Wellington. He saw it as part of

his job to know about and coordinate with these centres to help individual students and families find nearest centres to accommodate them. Sometimes, however, they were only able to provide one or two evenings each week.

My visit to a college in his region reinforced many of the challenges encountered in the region, and in much of New Zealand. The ESOL teacher, clearly devoted to her refugee-background students, told me that about one-tenth of the student population was refugee-background. She explained that they had one evening each week for homework help and the school was trying to get some programmes started for parents, as they were under-supported in language and education needs. The school had 28 hours of bilingual aides split between the two major language groups. The teacher stressed that new refugee-background students were bewildered outside of her classes: “They need one aide each sitting beside them in class. And the teachers need a lot more help than they are getting. It’s a drop in the ocean of what we actually need.”

This teacher was adamantly opposed to the MOE goal for achieving NCEA Level 2:

“The general consensus is that even without other issues like severe trauma and all the other issues that stop you learning in the first place, it takes about five years to learn a language and be reasonably proficient, so it’s insane to even be having this conversation about refugee-background students. Some of them have never been to school, they’re traumatised, they have culture shock and are not in any sort of a state to be learning anything. Once they get past that, then they need to learn the language. Then they need to be collecting their qualifications. Who knows how long that takes? When people say Oh, we want this goal for our educational achievement, I just go, and ‘Well that’s nice. I’m glad you feel that way, but for these kids it’s not relevant’. And it’s cruel to suggest that it should be relevant. It’s very unfair to put the extra burden on them, absolutely shocking.”

She also recognised that not only refugee-background students, but also the New Zealand-born students, need assistance to make sense of their new environment. She described an incident that happened the day before our interview, in which she heard two New Zealand students talking about the upcoming World Refugee Day assembly with some negativity. Instead of criticising them, she wisely realised that they, too, had experienced changes with a refugee population entering their school, but they had no opportunities to voice their feelings:

“It occurred to me that the school culture has changed enormously in five years with this influx of Colombian and Burmese refugees. It hadn’t occurred to me how that impacted on the students who were here. I spend so much time with the refugee kids, focusing on their needs and feelings and how they’re coping and what’s difficult for them. This is not easy for the other kids, and how much are we doing for them? I said to these girls, ‘Look. Why don’t you get a few kids together – you’re great and kind people. Let’s have a little meeting and talk from your perspective what’s been difficult for you and what you don’t understand and what we can do to make this a more inclusive place.’ They actually seemed relieved that I suggested this. I’m looking forward to starting this conversation. There are great resources for talking about cultural differences. We need to get this going.”

This teacher recognised that acculturation is a two-way process, and that native-born residents need support as well as newcomers. Chapter 4 will examine this process in more detail.

In my discussion with the regional coordinator, I learned more about the size and diversity of this region. As he explained, it was simply not possible for a child in Lower Hutt to come to a school in Upper Hutt for additional homework help. Having to divide the finances and resources resulted in less robust services than one might find in Christchurch or Nelson, certainly, though schools and agencies were doing their best. The coordinator explained the challenges refugee-background students and families face, much the same as those in the United States – their refugee backgrounds, adapting to a new culture and language, emotional and physical illnesses, additional responsibilities for youth, and lack of understanding by the New Zealand-born population. He was also hopeful because of the progress he has seen over the past 15 years in which he has been in the country. Fifteen years ago, he said, community response to resettlement amounted to a “moral panic.” And now there are resources to help schools and communities understand, though more needs to be done.

Missing Links: How Many?

I have primarily described situations that are working for New Zealand refugee-background students and youth. Problems included thus far include insufficient numbers of bilingual tutors and liaisons, poor advice for drawing on educational support funds, and bullying. These were happening at schools where refugee funding and special support was a part of the campus environment. What about those schools that do not have sufficient numbers to draw on extra funding and resources?

Recently I spoke with an advocate for resettled refugee educational support. She described the case of a family with three school-aged children that has been resettled in New Zealand for eight years. During that time, each child has remained in the bottom five per cent in school assessments, with no demonstration of improvement. Because of bullying and other issues, the family relocated from an area in which the children attended a low-decile school to a neighbourhood with a high-decile school. The first school, where the children continued at the lowest levels, had a large number of refugee-background students. The new school has a number of international students, but not refugee background ones. The family’s advocate provided several examples of how poorly informed this family has been over the years. She said:

“I spoke to the teen daughter about what she wants to do with her life. After a while she said, ‘Maybe accountancy.’ The girl cannot even count by twos! After all this time in school. She and the family have clearly not been given the guidance they need.”

The advocate said that she hoped the higher-performing school would be a good move, but in fact, the teachers and administration seem to have no information about the family or what they need. They are less prepared than the first school to help refugee children.

A teacher I met recently also asked me, “Have you visited any of the schools that are not doing well helping the refugee-background students?” She told me there were many and that I should make some visits. Due to the timing of her suggestion, I have not been able to find them and make connections for visits prior to completing this report. However, I do wonder how many schools are struggling and need more background information and support to help the students gain necessary literacy and

numeracy skills. Many whom I interviewed felt that refugee-background children need more time than five years to become competent in academics, especially those arriving over the age of 12. It is well-documented in literature that trauma relates to the inability to learn. This is a reason, but should not be an excuse. If children are struggling with protracted trauma that prevents their learning, then more study is not going to solve the problem. They need mental health services to support their healing process so that they can tap into their cognitive abilities. As New Zealand extends its resettlement process into more cities in the regions, more teacher training and professional development workshops need to address understanding the refugee journey and working with refugee-background students in schools, especially in schools new to resettlement.

Tertiary Education

There is a movement in New Zealand to recognise refugee-background students as a special equity group, along with other groups, such as Māori and Pasifika, who already have this classification. Four organisations, including Victoria University of Wellington, presented research and policy recommendations in their 2011 publication, “An Equitable Education.” They cite evidence that status as an equity group has helped those of Māori and Pasifika backgrounds improve their numbers attending and completing degrees. Equity status funds supports in terms of culture, social isolation, mentoring, and psychological issues. Because refugee-background students are not officially recognised as an equity group, they lack these supports that have helped other equity groups to achieve at these higher levels. Institutions are not required to provide supports and do so at an ad-hoc basis, often relying on the goodwill of individual faculty members and staff, who are not compensated for extra support they provide. The report documents the kinds of support needed and disputes the government argument that cuts are needed due to the economic downturn. In reply, the researchers contend that tertiary support would increase the economic benefit in the long term by resulting in high-skilled graduates who will be able to compete for high-skilled careers with good wages. The report also criticised the Government for cutting Refugee Study Grants. The report recommended that the Government establish a working group to determine the issues compromising refugee-background residents from accessing higher education and to establish refugee-background students as an equity group to receive financial and other supports. The Government has created a Refugee English Fund in place of the Refugee Study Grants.

Independently, the University of Auckland has declared refugee-background students to be an equity group. Victoria University has tried to do the same, but has met resistance because of lack of funding. Victoria does offer a refugee study group centre and a number of faculty advocates for the students. At least one professor has engaged her students to learn about resettled refugees in the area by engaging them with refugee-background students at a nearby secondary school. But there is no system in place to provide pastoral and academic support, transition courses, scholarships, or grants.

Adult Education and its Relationship to Employment

New Zealand’s National Centre of Literacy and Numeracy for Adults maintains a robust website for both learners and instructors of adult-level comprehension. The learning progressions for listening, speaking, reading and writing describe six levels of understanding and usage. An examination of the levels shows that competency

through to at least Level Three is needed to gain skilled employment. At this level, learners have gained extensive vocabulary, can think critically about material presented in English, and express themselves well in response to a variety of situations involving literacy.¹⁰⁹

The Centre has an assessment tool to measure adult learning and progression. However, according to an executive of a large English language learning institution, this assessment is more appropriate for native English speakers who have literacy problems. The manager said that several large English language agencies have successfully argued to get an exemption from using this tool because it does not measure the speaking and listening needs of language and because it is not contextual. She also described a vocabulary assessment that was highly cultural, one with which even some young native speakers might have issues. She cited one of its sentences that needed the student to know the word “cardigan.” In fact, there will always be a problem between a government’s desire to use a standard assessment tool and a school’s or an agency’s goal of providing individualised learning that is contextual for learners. In one interview, a staff member said:

“Our vision is about providing opportunities to learn English so that refugees and migrants can pursue what they want to in any aspect of New Zealand society. The end goal is about participation.”

This end goal mirrors that of the Government, but it does not fit neatly into the Government’s desire to measure goals, as it creates a learner-centred environment, which will always provide for a diversity of instruction.

In one interview, an ESOL teacher told me that she saw that the Afghani women she was teaching were not going to become a major part of the New Zealand work force. However, they were intent on studying because they wanted to be able to help and encourage their children in their studies. Their children could become important players in New Zealand’s economy if they had educated mothers. Another case she cited was a woman whose ability to write her own name and address varied from day to day, depending on her family circumstances. She had been able to bring three of her children with her, but another four were still in their conflicted country. Her husband had died, and she constantly worried about family members who were still in her homeland. Sometimes the woman seemed “shrouded in despair”, yet the teacher knew that coming to class was also a kind of lifeline for her. She concluded, “For her, it was more for mental health than literacy learning. Unfortunately, TEC doesn’t fund learning that goes nowhere.”

The agency executive I spoke with said that the flexibility of English programmes had grown more restrictive over the years, creating challenges for the organisation to meet the needs of the learners. She cited an example of a group of Bhutanese refugees enrolled in one of the programmes that required 200 hours. At one point, they learned of a five-week opportunity to pick asparagus. They needed the money and wanted work experience, so they were absent from class for five weeks. Frankly, this seems a goal that the government would encourage. But it could also require the agency delivering the language lessons to return money to the Government for not meeting the directives. In this case, the agency was able to pull from other finances. However,

¹⁰⁹ National Centre of Literacy and Numeracy for Adults (2013)

the example does show the need for flexibility in dealing with competing priorities to help former refugees integrate into New Zealand society.

This executive, who had been a part of consultative processes leading up to the new Strategy, was concerned that the measures were not measuring important goals. She felt that the measures determined for tracking progress were more based on easily measured assessments than what was really important and stated that, whenever someone at a consultation suggested a new measure, the response was always, “There is no money.” So she was concerned that the readily obtainable measures were not especially useful, as they might not measure what is truly meaningful and important to the refugee population.

Just as Cummins distinguishes between BICS and CALP, Hunter distinguishes between “literacy” and workplace “communication skills” in her study of migrant employment in New Zealand.¹¹⁰ Her research demonstrates the disconnect between government policies and measurements of English literacy that rely on a decontextualised International English Language Testing System and the need for highly contextualised language and cultural skills needed for successful employment. In interviewing managers at engineering and manufacturing companies, a merchandising business and a school, Hunter heard numerous complaints by employers who used policy rhetoric (the employees needed more literacy skills), but whose examples clearly pointed to the need for workplace-based language competency and a better understanding of “Kiwi” culture. For example, they did not like some migrant workers’ beliefs in hierarchical structures, and they were put off by migrant workers who did not join in after-hours socialising. But they wrongly blamed these cultural differences on literacy skills when, in fact, better results could be obtained by engaging in cultural literacy and mentoring discussions in which each side could gain more understanding and respect for the other.

Lessons in New Zealand culture and history are among those classes cut from the MRRC curriculum in order to devote more hours to employment concerns. Because the tools needed for workplace success can be better understood after the initial weeks of reception, it makes sense to retain time for cultural literacy and discussions at Mangere (while not deleting all employment modules, certainly) and leaving the longer process surrounding employment steps to the Red Cross Pathways to Employment services.

¹¹⁰ Hunter (2012)

4 TOWARDS A WELCOMING NEW ZEALAND

In both the United States and New Zealand, those serving resettled refugees talk about “preparing a community for refugees.” This phrase is understood as insuring that there are sufficient refugee and social services available in the region, that police are aware and receive training about the refugee experience, that there are sufficient medical and psychological services, and the like. Both agency staff and volunteers are invited to workshops and panels to learn more about refugees who may be coming from new areas of conflict and to interact with refugees. A region is examined for evidence of low-cost housing and employment opportunities (typically low wage, low skills). Sometimes the “community” referred to is not the community as a whole, but rather, ethnic communities that are the same as or similar to the newcomers’ background.

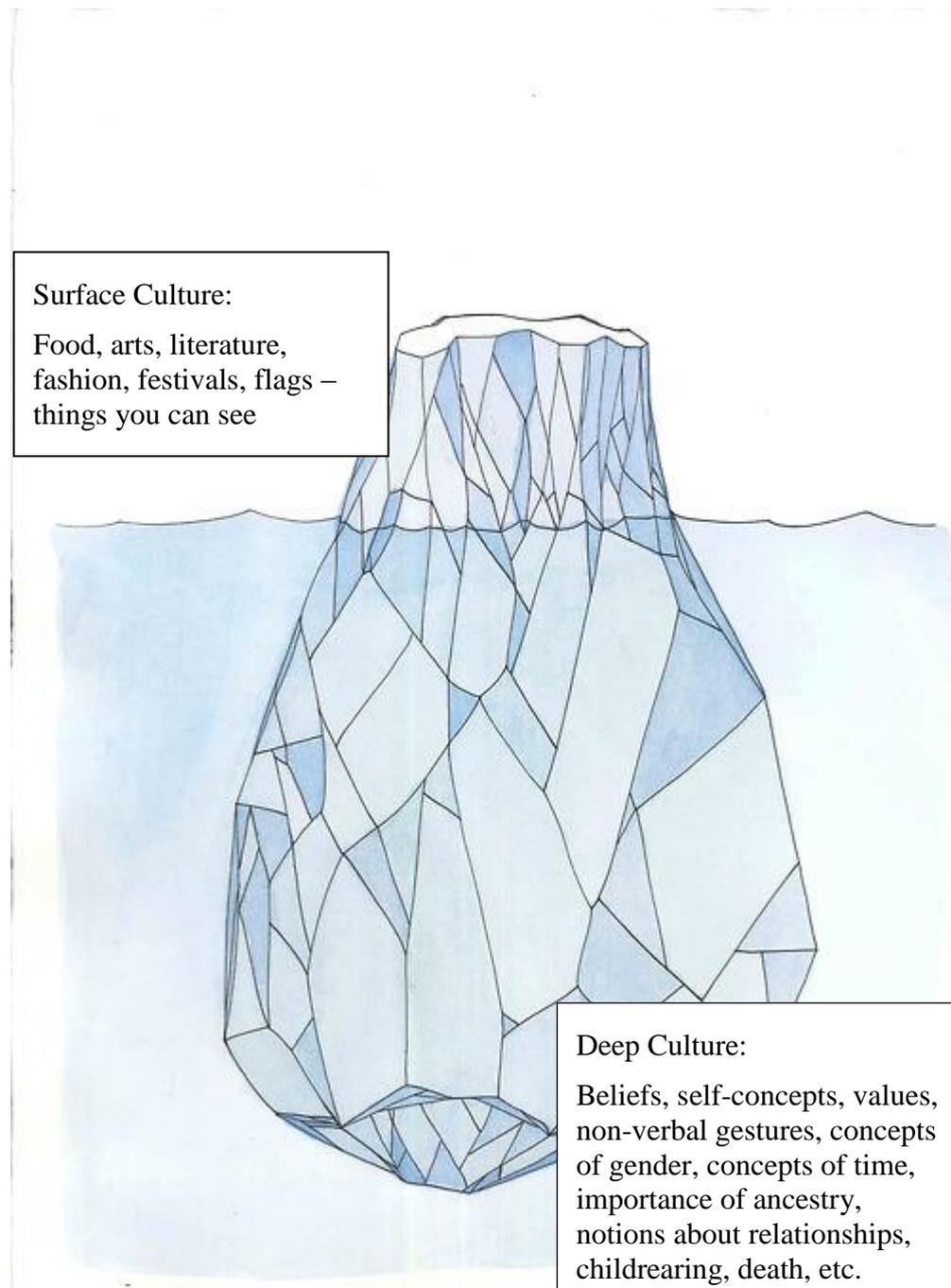
Taken in its broader, more literal sense, though, preparing a community has another important, but often overlooked aspect; that is, communicating with the longstanding residents of the community about settling refugees to live among them. Although there seems to be more awareness and empathy in New Zealand than in the US among the general population, integration will not occur until systematic and sustained education is provided to the greater communities that allows for listening to the concerns of the settled community and addressing their concerns with facts and opportunities to get to know newcomers directly.

Schools and communities in both New Zealand and the United States typically hold multicultural festivals and presentations to honour students and their families born outside of the country. These include ethnic foods, dances, dress, and music. Such events are enjoyed by all, and they are an introduction to international cultures. But they are a surface display of culture, not a deep one. Multicultural educators often describe cultural understanding with the illustration of an iceberg and reminder that the greater mass of the iceberg is below the surface (see illustration below). People are easily familiarised with aspects that can be seen. But the deeper ideas about life, death, purpose, relationships, religion, and so much more are what constitute the deeper meanings of culture. They are harder to learn and to understand, and they take time. They require meaningful communications: genuine listening and speaking with the goal of understanding, not persuading.

Historically, people are afraid of what they do not know, and for good reason. Ignorance of many things could cause pain, damage, or death – poisonous plants and animals are an obvious example. Unfortunately, the same has happened with other people who have intent to harm or kill. Thus it is easy to understand why people are most comfortable with those who share their sense of culture and, even within a given culture, those who share the same opinions and beliefs. When we do not have personal encounters with those outside that sphere of comfort, it is common to judge based on biases or stereotypes. Social psychologists Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahnemann (1974) described two heuristics (cognitive mental shortcuts) that people use to judge events and people. The representative heuristic is when people judge a situation or person based on how similar it seems to their common conception of a larger group. For instance, if one believes the idea that pit bull dogs are mean and dangerous, that person is far more likely to fear walking past a pit bull than a poodle. The availability heuristic is when people judge based on similar situations that come to mind quickly. If today’s front page news article is about a toxin found in imported potatoes, one might be unwilling to buy potatoes at the local farmers’ market, even though the potatoes are domestic.

If the headline in the international section cites Sudanese terrorists who kidnapped a New Zealand reporter, one might feel negatively towards the Sudanese refugees moving into the neighbourhood. This attitude can be reinforced if one's beliefs are constructed of stereotypes about Africans that they may have constructed from media and opinions of others. In the United States, for instance, media frequently linked the words "Muslim" and "terrorist," especially in the years immediately following 11 September 2001.¹¹¹

Iceberg Illustration of Surface/Deep Culture



¹¹¹ Yusof *et al.* (2013)

Judgments based on our stereotypes of people who are in some way different from us easily form the basis for prejudice, discrimination, and racism. They are unlikely to disappear without directly encountering evidence to the contrary. This is why multicultural integration will not occur if only a small sector of the population – the sector that is already most likely to have more accepting views about other cultures and ethnicities, because they work with them – receives training and information about new populations entering the community.

In past research cited here and in my own field work, I have heard refugee-background students and adults talk about difficulties fitting in and making friends with the settled New Zealand population. They will say that New Zealanders are friendly, but when they talk about their “community activities,” they mean their events within their ethnic/national enclaves: the Bhutanese community, the Somali community, etc. This has also been how the word “community” is typically used by teachers and those working with resettled refugees. This is not, I think, the full participation and social integration referenced in the New Zealand Resettlement Strategy. A school in the South Island and one in Auckland discussed bringing in community volunteers as tutors and mentors, and that is a start. But again, this is a small segment of the community and is more likely to bring in people who are already open to change and diversity. What about those who are averse to ethnic difference in their towns and neighbourhoods?

This year, a young refugee-background woman, highly educated and passionate about social justice and integration, envisioned and brought about a youth festival in Christchurch. The report on the festival stated that she “realised our youth need to create a place to express their identity regardless of ethnic or religious values. She wanted to create a place where every young person in Aotearoa could feel like they belong.”¹¹² She engaged numerous organisations in Canterbury to contribute finances and expertise for extensive advertising and media reports. The organising committee brought together workshops, sports, performances, art, and music to appeal to a wide range of young people. They wanted this festival to be about belonging and contributing, and not just another cultural festival that stayed at the surface level of culture.

In spite of a drizzly-weather day, the festival brought out an estimated 4,000 people in attendance, a remarkable number for a first-time event. The report on the youth fest described attendees participating and engaging with other youth and meeting new people through conversations and activities. This is an important step towards true integration. The report also stated that the ethnic diversity of the group was notable and “it was obvious that many of them were non-Pākehā.”¹¹³ The majority of participants who signed up to perform on stage represented dance and music from other countries. Sometimes majority populations do not think of their own race or ethnicity as having culture, because their culture has been normalised to be the expected way of living and doing things. Not only youth, but also adults need to enter conversations in which they recognise culture as something that everyone has, and that culture affects the ways in which not only other people operate, but also the lens through which they themselves view the world.

¹¹² ‘Summerz End’ (2014), p. 2

¹¹³ *Idem*, p. 17

In 2004, a grassroots organisation began in the United States to address these issues. Named “Welcoming America¹¹⁴,” the founders chose to concentrate on helping local people understand and appreciate refugee-background residents moving to their communities. They recognised that with the historically high migration flows around and since the turn of the twenty-first century, refugees and immigrants have settled in areas inexperienced with international residents. Small-town America, particularly in the South and Midwest, tends to be White and conservative. The stereotypes about such places include images of county fairs, Christian churches, and US flags; and values alluded to in the sayings “America: Love it or leave it,” and “As American as Mom and apple pie.” People fear the loss of those values by newcomers with other languages, races, and religions. Beginning in these areas – midwestern state Iowa in 2004, and southern state Tennessee in 2005-2006, the organisation now has affiliates in 17 states and a national office.

Welcoming America has a strategy that has proven successful in city after city that has struggled with multicultural integration. Staff begin by meeting and consulting with local leaders and officials who are interested in positive community integration. Welcoming America staff recognise that community members are more likely to be engaged if they receive information from local leaders rather than from an outsider. These leaders create a Welcoming Committee that drives the strategy and fundraising for information and events to pull the community together.

Together with the Welcoming Committee, Welcoming America staff create a strategic communications campaign to controvert negative publicity that may arise from, for instance, negative talk show radio or from people’s natural fears of the unknown. Using billboards, social media, and paid advertising, Welcoming America provides positive messages about refugees and invites community members to discuss their views and concerns and to learn more information in a public forum.

The final step involves creating a number of publicised public forums for residents, both settled and newcomer, to gather for community dialogues. Welcoming America provides training for Welcoming Committee members to create an environment in which residents feel safe to voice negative feelings and newcomers feel safe to explain who they are beyond the stereotypes. Welcoming America provides training materials on its website and also recommends a number of materials that provide in-depth explanations on how to create that safe space. Dialogues provide opportunities to determine and schedule other events in which residents engage with the refugee-background newcomers in meaningful ways and get to know more about one another better. These may involve working on a community issue together, beautifying a public park, or caring for a community garden together. The opportunities allow people to engage at the deeper levels of culture. As they gain personal knowledge of one another through social contact, prejudices give way to understanding and recognising that newcomers share important concerns, needs, and values. They do not need to agree with one another on all issues. The goal is to recognise and respect one another as fellow human beings through sustained personal contact.

Due to the success this initiative has had throughout the United States, Welcoming America now holds national conferences and workshops across the country. Their website provides examples of town and state initiatives, billboards and other media campaigns, and training modules. The organisation also holds frequent webinars to

¹¹⁴ <http://www.welcomingamerica.org/>

help others organise initiatives in their communities. Resources at <http://www.welcomingamerica.org/> include how-to videos and a full-length documentary, “Welcome to Shelbyville”, that illustrates breakthroughs gained in a rural Tennessee town by taking the Welcoming America approach.

I spoke with Susan Downs-Karkos, the Director of Strategic Partnerships at Welcoming America, and the organisation’s Deputy Director, Rachel Steinhardt, about extending their concepts to other refugee-resettlement countries, and they welcomed the idea, though they do not have the funding to bring Welcoming America staff to other countries. When I have discussed the concept with staff and teachers in the New Zealand resettlement regions, it has been warmly received. New Zealand seems an ideal place to create a nationwide attempt at this method of integration, as social participation is already a policy goal and the regions already have broad networks of agencies supporting refugees. The numerous resources on the Welcoming America website provide a starting point for creating a parallel strategy in New Zealand. This was the goal of the Christchurch Youth Fest as well – bringing people of all ethnicities and religions together to engage, dialogue, and in so doing, to find a sense of belonging.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

A panel of 20 international experts on trauma and disaster work assembled to identify empirically supported principles to aid those exposed to violence or catastrophes, and they published their results in 2007.¹¹⁵ Their experience included working with refugees, survivors of natural disasters, victims of rape, soldiers, and more. They agreed on five basic principles for survivors to avoid severe and long-term psychopathologies: the promotion of safety, calming, a sense of self- and collective efficacy, connectedness, and hope. The researchers explained how proper interventions promoting these principles can help survivors to understand and normalise their experiences and their reactions to the trauma events, realistically evaluate their present situation, and effectively use supports to move on to the future.

The goals of the New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy can be an avenue to each of these methods for reducing the potential for severe and/or long-term psychiatric disorders such as PTSD, acute stress disorder, depression, anxiety, phobias, prolonged grief, and sleep disorders. The order of priority, however, can make the difference between effective and ineffective interventions. Employment can be an avenue to safety, calming, efficacy, connectedness, and hope, but not if it is an added stress before people feel capable of finding and maintaining a job. When, however, they have had some time to process their journeys, gain communication with family members they left behind or who were resettled in another country, and when they feel sufficiently competent with the language and culture of their new country, they can use networks in their new communities to confidently search for employment at a level befitting their capabilities.

Based on the research findings described in the body of this report, this author suggests the following eight recommendations regarding the New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy:

1. Increased Communication and Respect between Policymakers and Field Experts

Although some policymakers have past experience of direct involvement in the fields for which they now create policies, many do not. Therefore, it is of critical importance that those in government working on refugee issues engage in respectful two-way dialogue with both those working in daily capacities with refugee-background people, many of whom also have a refugee background. It is equally important that agencies and advocates working with refugees approach policymakers with mutual respect and recognition of goodwill between the parties. This is hardly a situation unique to New Zealand, and in some ways, New Zealand is more progressive to this end than other countries, as there are tools in place to bring refugee voices and concerns to those whose jobs are to create and inform policy. However, I have observed miscommunication and negative beliefs from numerous parties, which slow down processes for change. For example, a Ministry spokesperson said that classroom interruptions at Mangere had reduced with the new Strategy, but a teacher there told me they had increased in English language classes. At the National Refugee Forum, the Ministry of Health discussed the critical need for medical offices to use Ministry-endorsed professional interpreters, but during the tea break, two participants talked

¹¹⁵ Hobfoll *et al.* (2007)

about the problem of professional interpreters working with clients on their home phones and discussing personal medical information in front of other family members. Direct evidence rather than hearsay is needed to bring forward problems. Problems will remain, however, if not discussed with those in a position to make a difference.

A major example involves employment. Ministry spokespeople have stated that they have listened to refugees, and the result is the emphasis on employment. Yet refugee-background adults I have spoken with in interviews or at social occasions have indicated they do not feel heard. One of the disconnects seems to be that former refugees definitely want work, but they do not want to be rushed before they feel confident with speaking and understanding English or before they have time to acquire skills that will be useful in meaningful work.

As illustrated earlier in this report, some statements written in the Strategy as indisputable (such as the good that employment brings) are not always the case, depending on the situation. Those working with refugees daily and refugees themselves readily state the barriers to their employment that must be overcome first. The model of two-way community dialogue espoused by Welcoming America would also provide a positive framework for respectful dialogue between government employees in immigrant and refugee work groups, those agencies they hire to carry out policies, and the refugee-background people for whom the policies apply. My conversations with both policymakers and service providers indicated frustration with one another that seemed to result from feeling disrespected or unheard.

Several people I interviewed in the regional locations indicated dissatisfaction with the consultation process conducted prior to the final version of the Strategy. Words they used to describe the process were nearly identical: that a consultant came to talk with them and ask their opinions, went away, and then came back with little to no evidence that the agency or refugee voices made a difference in the outcomes. Several interviewees said they were told that the decisions came from “high up,” indicating there was nothing to be done. It may be easy to dismiss such comments if they came from only one or two people, but this was not the case. I encountered no disagreement about the ultimate goals of the Strategy, but I did encounter multiple views on how to get there, both from providers and from refugee-background adults. They ran the gamut from resettled refugees agreeing they should get jobs quickly to feeling the need to have confidence with English and/or training before job-seeking. I spoke with a bilingual worker who was frustrated that she was working but others resettled at the same time were still living on government benefits. In another case, an Iranian PhD candidate said he had been looking for jobs but felt his national background contributed to his lack of success. Several teachers thought the MOE goal was “admirable” but unrealistic, given the research on achieving academic language proficiency.¹¹⁶ They noted other factors in refugee journeys that made five years too little, such as pre-literacy in their first languages and interrupted schooling/no past education prior to arrival in New Zealand in addition to stress, trauma, increased responsibilities, and bullying.

I also spoke with government employees who said it was incorrect to read the new Strategy to mean that resettled refugees should make getting any job in order to get off benefits their main priority. If this is not the case, again I recommend passages be rewritten to make the true intent more obvious, as every service provider I spoke with

¹¹⁶ Cummins (1984)

believed this was the primary message of the Strategy. Meaningful employment (from unskilled to highly skilled) and social participation for all capable refugee-background residents are goals that are likely to result in healthier, happier former refugees and communities after other, more immediate needs are met.

Government is not wrong in its concern that too many former refugees are unemployed and may have become complacent due to generous social benefits. One MBIE manager told me that former refugees are poorly counselled into believing that they cannot stay at least at the level of their current benefit if they take a low-paying or part-time job. If so, then counsellors need better training so that they can provide accurate instructions to former refugees who are capable of work, as this would benefit both the resettled refugees and the State.

It is also important to take into context the welfare abuse actually occurring. It is hard to argue with the fact that over 50 per cent unemployment of former refugees residing in New Zealand is too high. It may not be unreasonable, however, to expect that 25 per cent of refugee-background adults may never enter into paid work in New Zealand, given age, health issues, or childcare responsibilities. Government will not be able to completely eliminate the percentage of welfare beneficiaries who take unfair advantage of benefits. However, people also take advantage of government in other ways, such as tax evasion, and at far higher amounts. In the US, money lost annually due to tax evasion has been in excess of US\$300 billion in recent years. In contrast, welfare fraud cost the US government about US\$10-12 billion annually. Similarly, Victoria University Dr Lisa Marriott found that “for tax evaders, the average offending is about four times as much [as welfare fraud], but [they] have about a third of the likelihood of receiving a custodial sentence.”¹¹⁷ Much media attention, however, blames social services, and not white-collar crime, for increasing the deficit. More accurate communications could reduce prejudices and stereotypes arising from misinformation.

2. Re-Prioritise the Strategy Goals

One government manager I interviewed stated, “Of course, we don’t expect refugees to work if they aren’t healthy!” This is another statement that may seem so obvious that it can go unstated. However, making that sentiment clear in the Strategy could provide relief both for caseworkers charged to help refugees gain employment and for the refugee newcomers themselves. Cited research on the work-health connection must also be considered. New Zealand, unlike the United States, does require minimum pay that provides a living wage. Again, in contrast to the US, the socialised healthcare system allows all residents to receive medical care. However, “precarious work” arrangements that result in insufficient income or working multiple jobs can result in stress-related illness. Additionally, many employed refugees, both in past studies and my own fieldwork, describe life stresses related to low pay. One staff member I interviewed stated that underemployment was a major problem in her area.

Everyone involved in resettlement recognises the importance of former refugees to gain at least a conversational level of English in order to cope with daily life in New Zealand. There are many avenues to English language learning, yet some refugees still seem left out of opportunities. Further dialogue could reveal the problems they face to consider alternative pathways to English or advise them of programmes of

¹¹⁷ Nordqvist, Susie (2012)

which they may not be aware. Those who do find and take jobs early in their resettlement period also need opportunities to continue with English acquisition, as language can make them more useful on the job, safer as employees (because they understand safety regulations and procedures), and better able to interact with their co-workers. I highly recommend paid work/study situations in which employers include English language learning as part of the refugee-background workers' benefits, such as the English for Employment course. Government could consider employee incentives to encourage employers to try this approach. Media articles and some studies have shown satisfaction on the part of both employers and refugee-background employees involved in this kind of arrangement.

Several MBIE managers and staff have told me they agree that health, English language, and skills preparation must come before employment, and they are surprised that I and so many non-governmental employees in resettlement believe there is disagreement. This again points to issues in miscommunication and perhaps stereotypical assumptions that position government and non-government players as adversarial. Because many non-governmental organisations saw problems with the pre-Strategy consultation process, it could be useful to request specific recommendations from organisations composed of refugee-background people and from NGOs and contracted agencies. Both sides could work together to agree on manageable compromises that avoid stock replies such as "There is no money" or "This comes from high up." Working in the office of the MBIE for six months, I have seen and heard a genuine desire to help refugees succeed. This goal is also obvious on the part of teachers and agency employees. At the same time, both parties have indicated a "they don't know what they're talking about" attitude. Thus, more work is needed to improve relationships, decision-making, and communications.

New Zealand is considering off-shore English language education, as refugees who know they will be resettled in the country typically have a waiting period of up to a year before they arrive. After interviewing some government employees and teachers on this issue, I would recommend using those budgeted dollars in ways that would provide better results in the long-run. It would be expensive to employ off-shore teachers for the small numbers that New Zealand resettles, as they are brought in from numerous international locations. Many refugees in camp-like situations spend long hours in food and water queues, finding materials for fires, and simply trying to survive. These waiting periods are frequently quite stressful, resulting in inopportune times to learn and memorise a new language that they do not hear in their environment. Even learning materials provided on DVDs or computer programmes would be of doubtful use, as most refugees do not own or have frequent access to those technologies. The six weeks at MRRC provides far more language training than many refugees awaiting resettlement receive, certainly more than those awaiting resettlement in the United States. Given more pressing needs upon arrival and limited budget dollars, it seems that the money could be better spent on refugee supports related to the Strategy onshore.

3. Maintain Flexible Time Periods for Attaining Goals

To date, New Zealand has offered flexibility to former refugees by not creating fixed time periods at which they will stop receiving support unless they accomplish certain goals. Given the diverse backgrounds of refugees, this is the humane approach. The Government has, however, added stricter financial penalties around job offers provided through WINZ.

I have attended meetings at which committee members were trying to create more flexible ways to provide English-language hours to former refugees, as some fees-free English-language programmes are limited by total hours. They recognised that former refugees' abilities to access and begin programmes depend on their physical and psychological states, social contexts, employment or schooling and other factors. Though they had not solved the problem, it was encouraging to see the situation acknowledged and worth solving.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, one senior manager explained work "as soon as possible" to mean work once the other variables (such as health and required skills) were accommodated. This interpretation would allow for flexibility, as some resettled refugees may be ready to seek employment within months of arrival, and others may need several years. All of these provisions are important to maintain, given the diversity of backgrounds and needs of individual refugees.

4. Include Children and Youth

As is true in the United States, the refugees who receive attention by the government and resettling agencies tend to be the adults. They are the ones who must enter into housing agreements, be able to shop, take family members to doctor appointments, and complete many other tasks needed to merely survive. Unfortunately, as several interviewees mentioned, beyond insuring that children are vaccinated and enrolled in school, they do not fall under specific policies for which there is accountability other than school achievement. As I have mentioned in previous papers, they have unique challenges and often do not have the support of their parents that they would have in their homelands because the parents are coping with their own stresses and do not understand the culture, the language, or the schooling process.¹¹⁸ Youth have explained their feelings of being caught between two cultures: the need to retain that of their homeland and parents, and the desire to belong in their new culture.¹¹⁹ They can become too powerful in their family as they typically learn English in advance of their parents, thus tipping the family dynamics. Without proper guidance and support, they can become troubled or find themselves involved in criminal activities. One staff worker told me the story of a young refugee-background boy who waited almost a year before being provided with a bilingual liaison. Meanwhile, he had sat through classes with no understanding and endured bullying. Though he had looked forward to schooling, the first thing he said through his liaison was, "I refuse to come back here. I'm done." I noticed that there seemed to be unequal provisions for liaisons. For example, I visited a small school with two employed and two larger schools at which there were none.

The MOE goal should be given careful consideration. On one hand, teachers are correct to cite Cummins' work about the years it takes to become academically fluent. On the other, citing the ability of a refugee-background student to write a complete sentence after two years of intermediate-level education as an accomplishment seems problematic. Numerous studies have indicated that students rise to high expectations of their teachers. Expectations that are either too high or too low can demoralise students, resulting in lowered motivation.

¹¹⁸ McBrien (2005a)

¹¹⁹ McBrien (2009)

Strengthening Refugee Voices is a good opportunity for adults to voice their concerns. A similar regional opportunity for youth would also be beneficial. Unfortunately, I heard on numerous occasions, “We used to have a youth programme, but the funding has been cut.” Supporting youth in a holistic way is important for retaining educated refugee-background youth to remain in New Zealand to take on skilled jobs and support the country.

Additionally, I agree with the multi-group report that advocates for equity status for refugee-background students in or applying for tertiary education. Knowing there will be help can increase the motivation of those still in secondary school and allow greater numbers of this population to succeed, ultimately increasing the overall skills level of New Zealanders and contributing to a better economy.

5. Include Convention and Family Category Refugees

In a study involving 30 asylum seekers presenting at one human rights clinic in the US (88 per cent of whom were granted refugee status), Asgary *et al.*¹²⁰ found that all of the clients were employed in their home countries, 40 per cent had at least a university-level education from their home countries, and 58 per cent reported fair to very good healthcare access in their homelands. In contrast, in the United States, 57 per cent were unemployed and 27 per cent had precarious employment. None had health insurance (far more important in the US than in New Zealand), and 57 per cent had no contact with US health services. However, over 90 percent had physical scars resulting from torture and 69 per cent had post-traumatic stress disorder and/or other psychological health needs. Nearly half had to rely on family or home country residents’ support for housing and money. The researchers recommended:

At a minimum, that state agencies and advocacy and non-governmental organizations consider providing the same range of social and medical services that are provided to refugees coming to the US through UNHCR...The resettlement agencies should help asylees with social services such as housing, employment, food security, language and cultural immersion programs, insurance, and facilitate medical and psychological evaluation and services.

They also stated that such services are typical in other Western countries’ policies.¹²¹ This is not the case, however, in New Zealand. Discussion in the new resettlement Strategy about convention refugees is confusing at best and unchanged in flow charts. For example, paragraph 21 defines convention refugees, and paragraph 22 states that the Strategy responds to challenges identified by this sector. However, it does not state ways in which it responds. The “End to End Refugee Resettlement Process” Chart following paragraph 31 places asylum seekers/convention refugees in pre-arrival and reception stages but without any services (such as those listed for quota refugees). Even when asylum seekers are granted refugee status (and New Zealand percentages of granting this status are quite low), they receive none of the support afforded quota refugees in terms of comprehensive medical screenings. They can request medical screening, but without guidance are less likely to do so. They receive no help with housing, English language learning, education/training, career counselling, or other resettlement support that is supplied to all quota refugees. In

¹²⁰ Asgary *et al.* (2012)

¹²¹ *Idem*, p. 966

fact, I have heard convention refugees disparaged by staff working with quota refugees who called them “queue jumpers” and stated they should wait their turn or be deported.

Negative attitudes, especially by those who work with refugees, is cause for concern. Refugee journeys are not organised bureaucratic pathways. They are chaotic, highly dangerous, and frightening. Finding fault with people who, in desperation, risk their lives to claim asylum due to possible imprisonment, torture or death in their own countries is not humanitarian, and such refugees ought not to be punished for their flight. This is also true of those in the refugee family support category. At the least, they deserve the same initial reception support as those beginning their resettlement at MRRC in terms of language support, medical screening, career counselling, and community reception. Maintaining a tiered system in which quota refugees are provided more attention and aid creates a government level of discrimination that makes more obstacles for an already challenging resettlement situation. I was told recently that including Convention and Family Reunification refugees is a part of the multi-year strategy. This needs to be both communicated and indicated in the Strategy so that agencies know when it will occur.

New Zealand should also consider resettling unaccompanied children. Currently only adults and families are admitted as quota refugees, and given the distance of New Zealand from refugee-producing countries, a minor is highly unlikely to arrive as an asylum seeker. However, the need is great, as so many refugee children have lost their parents to war, torture, imprisonment, and disease. Additionally, as in the example from Christchurch, refugee-background children may find themselves abandoned after arrival. If there were official policies, protection and support systems would be in place to help such children.

Finally, numerous public figures and agencies, including the Red Cross, have called for New Zealand to expand its quota beyond 750. There is little evidence that this has been given serious government consideration. At World Refugee Day celebrations at Parliament in 2014, Minister Woodhouse simply stated that the government was more concerned with responsibly resettling the current quota than it was on expanding it. At the same event, the Red Cross director challenged that statement, calling for New Zealand not only to resettle a larger number, but also to treat asylum seekers and convention refugees equally.

Thus, the following recommendations need to be applied not only to quota refugees, but all refugees in New Zealand.

6. Simplify the Application Process for Needs and Benefits

In meetings I attended, there were discussions about complicated and confusing forms for at least two major resettled refugee concerns: family reunification, and accessing government-paid language instruction and education. The staff at meetings were often unclear themselves on the best ways to advise refugee-background clients, and advice was mixed. For instance, one ESOL teacher told me that she advised late-teen students to apply for a Student Allowance, as it would provide them and their families with more money for three years. I heard that was bad advice at another meeting, where it was explained that they would run out the time for that benefit before they could apply it to entering tertiary education. There was also confusion about how and when to apply for family reunification, which causes great stress to family members trying to bring relatives to safety.

Now that there is an organised Strategy, perhaps ministries can work together to determine ways to streamline and clarify these processes, making it easier for those in the field to give sound advice and reducing the stress that confusion places on the refugee-background clients.

7. Even the Access to Gainful Employment

US policies of work before all only help refugees marginally. Research consistently concludes that English learning is essential for refugees to be safe, more comfortable in the society, and capable of searching for jobs that match their capabilities. Second to that is additional education or training (or even basic education in the case of those who have minimal or no schooling).

The United Kingdom's strategy for resettlement also includes employment as a key goal. A 2004 study conducted by the Institute for Employment Studies in the UK examined attitudes of employers towards hiring refugee-background individuals and policies of companies that hired former refugees.¹²² Several of the companies made this practice part of their deliberate hiring strategy due to labour shortages and a commitment to promote diversity in their workplaces. Some worked directly with refugee agencies on recruitment, as also occurs in New Zealand. Another useful strategy was to begin with work placement opportunities, in which refugees could demonstrate their skills and receive on-the-job training regarding a UK-style of performing the job. Most schemes involved taking on a refugee-background adult for 8-12 weeks. Incentives for employers were that, in exchange for providing training to the former refugee, the employer would not provide pay. The person-in-training would still receive benefits. If the experience was mutually satisfying for the company and the former refugee, the company could hire the person. If not, at least the resettled refugee would have some experience working in his or her new country. Refugee-background job seekers in New Zealand are often frustrated by employers who want applicants with experience working in New Zealand. This kind of scheme could encourage more companies to give refugee-background workers a chance.

A major reason that employers gave for their reluctance to hire former refugees or for keeping them at the low-skill levels of employment was their lack of English language abilities. Some companies created English classes on the premises, as they found that the opportunities allowed their employees to advance. Others felt this need should not fall to the employers. Once again, this challenge points to the needs of English acquisition. If employers are flexible regarding hours or opportunities for refugee-background workers to continue with English-language learning after they are employed, then job seekers could benefit from employment without the risk of losing important language learning classes. And if employers offer them chances for advancement as their English skills grow, then the companies could worry less about retention of the employees.

Although managers interviewed for the UK study indicated that there was extra work on their part to hire and retain those with refugee backgrounds, they also described benefits. Some said that working with the refugee agencies was more cost-effective than paying employment agency rates. Others stated that their whole workforce grew in understanding as they learned about the refugee experience and went through

¹²² Hurstfield *et al.* (2004)

diversity training workshops. Still others said that they were impressed by the high calibre of the former refugees on their staff.

8. Holistic Approach to Preparing Communities

As described in Chapter 4, I highly recommend that New Zealand include its own culturally-appropriate version of the Welcoming America programme. Diverse local leaders including businesses successfully employing refugee-background workers, school administrators, and other local leaders could form a committee with some refugee agency managers and refugee-background residents to work through the online training materials together, examining them to make them suitable for Kiwi society. As they work together as a group, they could then follow the steps with positive media and invitations for community dialogues and projects. The project could be piloted in one region, and then expanded to others after a thorough review with changes resulting from lessons learned. This kind of programme can also provide greater access to employment, as dialogues and projects can help employers learn more about the refugee journey and break down their concerns about hiring former refugees.

Similar to the deep cultural understandings that can result from such a project, growing the Canterbury Youth Fest and bringing similar projects to other resettlement cities could create possibilities for greater cultural exchanges among New Zealand's diverse youth population. Both artists and information providers could work together to promote after-Fest dialogues with various topics of importance to young people, encouraging Pākehā, Māori, migrants, and refugees to discuss and work together on issues that motivate them.

The Ultimate Goal

As mentioned earlier in this paper, the Strategy offers the following for the overall goal of resettlement:

Refugees are participating fully and integrated socially and economically as soon as possible so that they are living independently, undertaking the same responsibilities and exercising the same rights as other New Zealanders and have a strong sense of belonging in their own community and to New Zealand.

The reprioritisation of goals would be better communicated with a goal statement such as the following:

Refugees feel safe and become sufficiently healthy to follow appropriate education and work plans that allow them social and economic integration to live independently, undertaking the same responsibilities and exercising the same rights as other New Zealanders, with a strong sense of belonging in their own community and to New Zealand.

Such a statement mentions the goals in a new order of priority and eliminates the misunderstood phrase “as soon as possible.” “Appropriate” timing would imply flexibility more than the former phrase.

There is no perfect solution, nor a “one size fits all” that will work. Some former refugees will be ready and willing to work within six months of resettlement; some will never be healthy enough to join the work force. These categories are the outliers. The majority are likely to become useful, satisfied employees if they have been

welcomed, given time to adjust to the culture, the language, and provided with training opportunities to help them gain sustainable, meaningful jobs.

What Can We Learn from One Another?

Both New Zealand and the United States are offered as role models to other refugee resettlement countries because of their long-standing commitment to helping refugees, not only through their resettlement strategies, but also through offshore humanitarian aid. Given the difference in country sizes, it is not surprising that the US resettlement programme is decentralised and unequal from state to state. It could, however, learn from effective systems in New Zealand regarding initial reception supports. Individual states, especially those with high resettlement numbers, could consider pooling initial reception funds that now get spread among the nine resettlement agencies to create a Mangere-like reception centre.

The United States could also learn from New Zealand's plan to create family and career pathways that are flexible rather than short and time-bound for assistance. Even though the Great Recession is officially ended, recovery has been slow, and jobs remain in short supply. Even long-time local residents need assistance finding career opportunities, and they depend on networks to help them find jobs. Thus, pressuring former refugees to find and sustain work within 3-6 months of resettlement adds excess stress to lives already complicated with trauma. In New Zealand's new attempt to emphasise employment, it is hoped that the government will maintain the exemplary flexibility it has provided to refugees in past decades.

The United States could learn much from New Zealand on making student and teacher educational supports, English language learning opportunities, and other assistance for refugee-background residents easier to find and access. Community-hub schools are successful models, as are the many New Zealand resources that are easy to find on the Internet. Teacher notification of receiving new refugee students helps to create a more welcoming environment for the students and families.

New Zealand has faced increasing struggles with its identity since at least the 1970s when its colonial parent, Great Britain, joined the EEC, which in 1993 became the EU. During this time, New Zealand's largest economic partner turned its interests more towards Europe, leaving New Zealand to create new strategic partners. Throughout its colonial history from the 1830s -1840s, New Zealand granted migratory favour to those arriving from England, Scotland, and Ireland. As it has turned its gaze towards South Asia for migrants and economic prosperity, its people have had to reconsider their cultural and national identities.

A Kiwi version of Welcoming America could facilitate this process and be used not only to develop truly welcoming communities for refugee newcomers, but also for the continuing numbers of Pasifika and Asian migrants looking to make New Zealand their home. A major difference between New Zealand and the United States is that New Zealand has always recruited people to settle here, while the US has traditionally regulated its borders to prevent an onslaught of too many migrants. These differences could contribute to the national attitude towards new migrants, with New Zealand having the more open approach to diversity. Thus, a Welcoming New Zealand programme might have an even greater effect here than it does in the United States.

Both countries, through their dialogues and actions, could serve to remind one another that refugee resettlement is not, or at least should never be about politics or

economics. Fundamentally, it is a selfless humanitarian action in defence of endangered human lives. Although employment can be important in successful resettlement, it should be looked on as a key because of what it does for the *refugee* in terms of his or her own positive self-image, and not because of what it can do for a resettlement country's political or economic agendas. When employment provides a refugee with a sense of purpose and meaning, including the satisfaction of taking care of oneself and family, then it is a component of successful resettlement. Employment, however, is not the ultimate goal of resettlement, and it is not a part of successful resettlement when it causes additional stress and/or health or family issues. Those of us who hear refugee stories, even those of us who visit the camps, only to return to our comfortable lives, can never fully comprehend the amount of human suffering most endure. When resettlement prioritises compassion and opportunity, it becomes truly humanitarian.

APPENDIX 1: A BRIEF SOCIAL HISTORY OF ATTITUDES TOWARDS IMMIGRANTS, US AND NEW ZEALAND

Information in this appendix supports the need for increasing both formal and non-formal education about global cultures.

The United States

Reactions to Native Americans

Theories vary regarding the origin of the American Indian population, but they were discovered by Europeans centuries before the Māori first landed in New Zealand. Early expeditions probably began in the 10th century by Viking explorers. Columbus arrived in 1492, followed by Portuguese, Italians, French, and British. The earliest European settlements in North America were established by the English in 1620s. Along with traders, many were British Protestants searching for refuge from impositions of the Anglican Church by the Government.

Relationships between these first settlers and the American Indians were mixed. Facts about such events as “the first Thanksgiving” and Pocahontas have been shrouded by myths still taught to US school children that perpetuate the concept of American exceptionalism.¹²³ Although there was trade and some cooperative between the natives and the settlers, the Europeans took over native Indian lands for their farms and settlements. Indians also suffered epidemics and death from contact with European diseases for which they had no immunity. After the Revolutionary War, politicians and statesmen attempted to “civilise” Indians and assimilate them. White Americans believed their values of patriarchy, land ownership, and individualism were superior to Native Americans’ beliefs in matrilineal values and communal use of the land. By the middle of the 19th century, concepts of manifest destiny¹²⁴ and American exceptionalism were used as arguments to take over the Texas territory and to remove Indians from their homelands, pushing them further west. Boarding schools were established for Indian children, first on reservations and later sometimes hundreds of miles from the children’s parents, in an attempt to force assimilation on the young generations and to place them into roles as servants or labourers. Attitudes towards American Indians began to change as they enlisted to fight in World War I. However, negative attitudes remained, and media continued to portray Native Americans in pejorative stereotyped roles. Indian activism for recognition and rights increased throughout the 20th century, the notable example being the violence at Wounded Knee in the 1970s. The 1975 Self Determination and Education Assistance Act marked a turning point, with the US Government encouraging self-government and the establishment of American-Indian determined education. The 2010 census indicates the less than two per cent of the population claims full or mixed American Indian blood, with over three-quarters living off of reservations.

¹²³ “American exceptionalism” is a complex term used to indicate that the United States is unique from all other nation states in terms of its revolutionary beginnings, ideology, individualism, etc. It also refers to the belief that the United States is superior to other nations.

¹²⁴ “Manifest destiny” was a concept used by many Americans to justify the conquest of lands expanding west in the 1800s (such as taking land from Mexico and from American Indians), and beyond North America in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The themes include the ideas that America is virtuous and has a mission destined by God to spread its ideas and institutions throughout the world.

Slavery and the Black Experience

Settlement and slavery grew side by side from the beginning of the 17th century, and new laws created ever more restrictive rules, such as declaring slaves to remain so for life, condemning children of slaves to also be slaves, and forbidding slaves to sell goods. To enslave Africans, Whites had to believe they were less than human. Black had long symbolised evil and death to the English, and they extended that symbol to those with dark skin. Numerous Christian traditions as well as Mormons interpreted the “mark of Cain” described in Genesis Chapter Four to be black skin, and they used this interpretation to justify slavery and discrimination against Blacks. However, numerous states abolished or restricted slavery during and after the Revolutionary War. After Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin in 1793, cotton became a profitable crop in the South, increasing the need for slaves. By 1830, 18 per cent of the US population were slaves, and relations between northern and southern states grew more divided.¹²⁵

The slave period culminated with the presidential election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860, followed by secession of southern states and the Civil War 1861-65. Although the union was restored and slaves freed at the war’s conclusion, freed Blacks were not granted equal rights and dignity. Even supporters of emancipation did not necessarily believe in racial equality. The popular 19th century pseudoscience of phrenology proclaimed that Black skulls and brains were inferior to those of Whites. Teleology, anthropology, and evolution were all used as arguments to proclaim that Africans and their descendants were best suited to serve Whites. Southern states passed restrictive laws that advanced segregation, and in 1896, the Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation was constitutional. Founded in 1865, the Ku Klux Klan became a terrorist organisation of White supremacists who remain responsible for intimidating, beating, and killing thousands of Blacks and their White supporters.

Meanwhile, movements to promote Black intelligence and equality also advanced. Howard University and Spelman College were founded to provide tertiary education to Black men and women. Harvard’s first Black graduate, W. E. B. DuBois called for equality and became the first leader of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP), a prominent organisation during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 60s. The Harlem Renaissance Movement of the 1920s promoted Black arts and intellect, creating a new sense of cultural identity. Numerous factors, including the advent of television which brought films of police spraying Black protestors with fire hoses and unleashing dogs on marchers increased public support for ending segregation and unequal opportunities. In the southwest and western areas of the country, Mexican immigrants were also fighting for equality. The landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964 finally abolished *de facto* discrimination based on race, colour, religion, or national origin.

Efforts and sacrifices made by so many during the civil rights decades have certainly improved life conditions for millions of Black Americans. At the same time, a number of studies have indicated that prejudice and racism have moved from overt attitudes and behaviours to more subtle ones. Examples include “White flight,” the tendency of White homeowners to relocate to other areas when new residents of colour move to their neighbourhoods. Between the 1960s and 1990s, many realtors, bankers, and

¹²⁵ Slavery and the Making of America (2004)

employers used the unethical practice of redlining¹²⁶ to deny services and opportunities to Black clients. The term “driving while Black” is a slang term that refers to police actions that profile minorities, especially young Black males (and in the past decade, any Hispanic), supposedly to investigate criminal activity (this procedure has been found unsuccessful in finding criminals). A 2012 Associated Press poll found that racial prejudice increased between 2008, the year the United States elected its first Black president, and 2012, the year of Obama’s re-election.¹²⁷ A 2013 study from the University of Rochester demonstrated that racial discrimination is highest in Southern areas that were dominated by slavery and cotton pre-Civil War.¹²⁸

United States refugee resettlement since the 1980s has included large numbers of Ethiopians, Somalians, Sudanese, and other African refugees. Already traumatised by persecution and war, these newcomers often face daily prejudice and discrimination simply due to the colour of their skin, something they may have never experienced previously. Unlike war, one cannot escape from one’s skin colour, and facing a lifetime of racial prejudice adds an additional stressor to the many that are already a part of the refugee experience.

Migration, 1850s - Present

Early generations of European settlers railed against the Irish newcomers in the mid-19th century as well as the Chinese settling on the West Coast. Both groups were considered ethnically inferior. In 1882, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, not repealed until 1943. This act precluded Chinese from becoming citizens, increased their taxes, and prohibited further immigration to the United States. An even larger migration occurred between the late 1890s through the 1920s, bringing another 25 million mostly eastern and southern Europeans to settle in the United States. In 1921, Congress passed the National Origins Act, designed to restrict immigrants from southern and eastern Europe and to bar entrants from Asia. This quota system remained in effect until the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. Large majorities of Democrats and Republicans voted in favour of the new bill, believing that it would not greatly alter the migration impact on the country. They were wrong. Immigration increased substantially from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. By 2000, about 11 per cent of the US population was foreign-born.

Along with migration came nativist prejudices towards the newcomers. During the mid-19th century period, most settled Americans practised Protestantism. Thus, Irish Catholics and non-Christian Chinese were easy targets of suspicion and fear. The larger turn-of-the-century migrations from southern and eastern Europe renewed xenophobia, causing nativists to petition Congress to limit immigration. Catholics changed from five per cent of the US population in 1850 to 17 per cent in 1906, becoming the largest religious denomination in the country, and many Americans feared that the country could become a Catholic nation.¹²⁹ Stereotypes labelled

¹²⁶ Redlining is an illegal practice whereby lenders define certain areas in a community or certain groups of people to be “high risk.” Thus, they would not provide loans for the group or for people wishing to purchase in the defined neighbourhoods.

¹²⁷ Attitudes towards African-Americans, 2012

¹²⁸ Legacy of Slavery, 2013

¹²⁹ Byrne, Julia (2000)

Catholics as dirty, lazy, poor, and ignorant, and they were discriminated against in terms of employment, housing, and education. Catholic and Protestant antipathies were a major source of conflict in the public school system, where Protestant Bible readings, prayers, and hymns increased as more Catholic students enrolled. Ellwood Cubberly, the prominent scholar and Dean of the College of Education at Stanford University worried that the United States had failed to sufficiently Americanise over 32 million people who immigrated there between 1820 and the turn of the century. He wrote:

These Southern and Eastern Europeans are of a very different type from the Northern Europeans who preceded them. Illiterate, docile, lacking in self-reliance and initiative, and not possessing Anglo-Teutonic conceptions of law, order and government, their coming has corrupted our civic life.¹³⁰

Large immigration flows at the turn of the 21st century have increased numbers of African and Middle Eastern newcomers, both as voluntary immigrants and as refugees. Especially after September 2001, hate crime rose against Muslims in America and or those perceived to be Muslim, such as Sikhs. Migration (both “legal” and undocumented) from Mexico and other Latin American countries has increased prejudice towards Hispanics. Gun-toting vigilantes patrol the Mexican/US borders. Some states have enacted laws that amount to ethnic profiling, allowing police to stop anyone they believe may not be in the country legally. Such discrimination creates fear in the ethnic population that can cause danger, as many would not contact police in the event of domestic violence or community violence for fear of deportation. Seasonal migrant workers are frequently underpaid and housed in desperate conditions. Even though their hard labour is critical to the US farming economy, they live in fear that their managers will treat them inhumanely or have them deported.

Ongoing social and political debate revolves around fears that a multicultural country will overtake the concept of a “melting pot” American identity, that immigrants have a negative impact on the job market and economy, and that other languages will weaken English-language usage. Views are mixed amongst citizens, and media reporting, as well as language used in media, can affect social viewpoints. For instance, shortly after the 11 September 2001 attacks on New York City’s Twin Towers, news articles frequently placed the word “Muslim” before “terrorist.”¹³¹ This was not done in the case of terrorist groups of other religions, and the repetition can cause consumers to conclude the Muslims are terrorists.¹³² There are many groups that work to decrease immigration and refugee resettlement in the United States, but there are also countless individuals and organisations that work to assist newcomers.

New Zealand

British Relations with Māori

Although there are competing theories, evidence indicates that New Zealand was an unexplored land of mountains, rainforests, and plains dominated by birds until between 1250-1300 CE, when Polynesians first discovered Aotearoa. The first Europeans did not discover the island nation until the Dutch explorer Abel Tasman in

¹³⁰ Cubberly, Ellwood (1909)

¹³¹ Howe, Jennifer (2012)

¹³² McBrien, Jody (2005b)

1642 (who never went ashore); and later, British explorer James Cook (in 1769). Thus, Māori increased in population and settled the North Island and sections of the South Island for at least 470 years before forced to share the land with Europeans. Most Europeans saw New Zealand as an undesirable place, remote, wild, and dangerous. Early immigrants were attracted by whaling and sealing prospects. British women began settling with their missionary husbands in the early decades of the 1800s. Increasing numbers of migrants, primarily from England, Scotland, and Ireland, arrived in the early 1830s. As the European population increased and British settlers took over more land, tensions arose with the Māori, and British law did not extend to badly behaving British settlers. In addition, the London-based New Zealand Company planned to bring hundreds of new settlers to Aotearoa. Great Britain sent Captain William Hobson, the Lieutenant-General of New South Wales, to establish New Zealand as a colony. The Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840 as a political compact between the British and Māori to found a nation with protection to both groups.

Some European settlers held Māori as slaves, a practice that was outlawed by the Treaty. With time, pre-Treaty slave arrangements became extinct. War was not required to end slavery in New Zealand, and there appears to be no long-standing tensions from slave history and aftermath as there is in the United States.

Differing interpretations of the Treaty, along with occasions when the Crown simply ignored the Treaty to its benefit, resulted in occasional violence. As settler numbers increased, Māori feared for their landholdings. In 100 years, the ratio of Māori to European settlers changed from five hundred to one in 1769 to one in ten by 1870, as Māori were beaten back by European diseases and land confiscation.¹³³ In the last decades of the 19th century, the Treaty was largely abandoned by the settlers, and settlers acquired massive amounts of Māori land. Continuing petitions to the Crown in the 1920s and 30s brought some redress for Māori fishing rights, but land grievances continued. Protests in the 1970s and 80s brought about the Treaty of Waitangi Act of 1975, which created a Tribunal to hear Māori claims. In 1985, the tribunal duties extended to redress problems since the original signing in 1840. These legislative changes had widespread effects on Māori rights and relationships with the European background New Zealanders. Today, the Māori population stands at just over 598,000, or one in seven of the New Zealand population.¹³⁴ Four seats in Parliament are held for guaranteed Māori representation, and there are currently eight Māori MPs. Several Māori communities hold *hui*, formal welcoming ceremonies for new refugees, and some Māori have formed business partnership with refugee settlers.

Immigration History

Unlike American history, European settlers did not flock to migrate to New Zealand. The sailing distance was long and dangerous. Already established communities in the “New World” of North America were far more appealing than reaching stretches of wilderness that were sparsely populated by Māori, rough traders and gold diggers, and migrants from the penal colony established in Sydney. The Treaty of Waitangi gave citizenship to those travelling from Britain, and both government officials and entrepreneurs offered incentives to encourage settlement. In spite of some dubious

¹³³ Pool, Ian (2012)

¹³⁴ Statistics New Zealand (2013)

claims and advertisements, the New Zealand Company transported about 14,000 British settlers between 1840 and 1852. Although immigrants were primarily from Britain and Ireland, small numbers arrived from Germany and Scandinavia.

The gold rushes of the 1860s attracted mostly male migrants from Australia and South China and established a growing economy for the new colony. However, by 1870, New Zealand faced a depression due to declining wool prices and the decrease in gold mining and production. To boost the economy, colonial Treasurer Julius Vogel devised a scheme to attract more immigrants from Europe (primary the British Isles) to build roads and railways. The Immigration and Public Works Act of 1870 advanced this proposal. Many Europeans overcame their negative stereotypes of New Zealand when offered free or partially paid transportation as well as free land (mostly confiscated from Māori). Between 1870 and 1885, the immigrant population nearly doubled.

Early signs of discrimination rose as New Zealand suffered a depression from 1885 to 1900. Thousands of settlers originally from the British Isles migrated to Australia. Remaining Anglo-Saxon settlers became intolerant of settlers from other countries. Chinese became subject to increased taxes and immigration limits. However, the turn of the century brought renewed prosperity to the country. The invention of refrigeration aboard ships improved the economy, as New Zealand could begin to export its meat and dairy products. A large number of Australians (themselves originally British and Irish) moved to New Zealand as did more migrants from the United Kingdom. Well-off New Zealanders welcomed these immigrants to work on their farms and in their homes. The numbers of British Protestant immigrants, however, made the young country more monocultural and less tolerant of people from other ethnicities and religions.

The two World Wars decreased migration and intensified New Zealanders' discrimination against anyone not of British or Irish background. Through assistance by the New Zealand Government, more British arrived. Another depression closed the country to all immigration in 1932. The Second World War brought a small number of European Jews and New Zealand's first refugees, but the Labour Government opposed increased immigration and would not fund it. Still, there was a shortage of skilled workers. From 1947 to 1977, a carefully orchestrated scheme brought over 100,000 new immigrants who were primarily single, skilled in industry, and young. Once again, the majority were of British origin. However, the last half of the twentieth century gave rise to increasing numbers of Asians and Pacific Islanders, such that 30 per cent of New Zealand's foreign-born population were not White British migrants. New Zealanders were confronted by their racist attitudes, and as New Zealand began to consider its identity as a Pacific nation, both social and political discrimination decreased. The 1975 Immigration Law required all new immigrants to have entry permits, disestablishing the prior free entry for British and Irish migrants.

Since the 1990s, the largest source of newcomers has been Asia: China, Hong Kong, Korea, Japan, and others. The 2013 Census indicates that, if present rates continue, Asians will overtake Māori as the largest minority population.¹³⁵ Current New Zealand refugee policies and practices are also targeting larger numbers of refugees from the Asian sector of the world. Although some refugees interviewed mentioned issues of prejudice, especially employment discrimination, most interviewed seemed

¹³⁵ Ihaka, James *New Zealand Herald*, 4 December 2013

happy in their schools and communities and safe in New Zealand. As a former CNN employee and instructor in media education, I pay attention to the way in which news is presented and responded to by online readers. My informal examination of online comments by New Zealanders in response to news items about refugees notes that Kiwis are more positive and compassionate than those of United States posts to similar news articles.

APPENDIX 2: RESEARCH METHODS

I used qualitative research methods in my New Zealand research, travelling to five of the six refugee resettlement regions in the country (Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, Nelson and Christchurch; Palmerston North was not included due to time restrictions). In each area, I visited at least one school in which refugee-background students are enrolled. I chose schools based on recommendations from the Regional Refugee Education Coordinators. These included four preschool learning centres, two elementary schools, two intermediate schools, six secondary schools, and two universities that offer specialised programming for refugee-background students. I also visited nine adult education programmes, and four after-school homework help centres, and nine refugee service agencies.

All who participated in interviews or focus groups agreed to participate voluntarily and signed informed consent documents approved by the University of South Florida Internal Review Board. The participants included the following:

- 23 teachers (3 of whom were at the tertiary level)
- 29 students (secondary; 3 at tertiary level)
- 12 refugee service providers
- 5 MBIE staff/managers
- 6 MOE staff/managers

I used semi-structured interview protocols that varied depending on the categories noted above. Interviews lasted 30-60 minutes, although a couple of the school ESOL or refugee staff coordinators stayed with me for many hours as they brought me through the schools and to various classrooms for observations and/or interviews. I observed in 15 classrooms and participated in numerous staff meetings at both the MBIE and MOE. My host ministry, MBIE, is the lead ministry for the new Refugee Resettlement Strategy, and I interviewed key personnel who worked on or are currently implementing it. Additionally, I conducted an extensive literature review concentrating on New Zealand and United States policy and practice, but also using international research when topics had scant publications (such as the relationship between employment and health of resettled refugees).

The majority of the interviews and focus groups were recorded on a digital recorder, and I personally transcribed each recording. After that, I read each interview several times, after which I coded them for themes, then looked at themes that were found in multiple transcripts as well as in literature I reviewed. These helped me to formulate topics of concern examined in the report.

I sent chapters to external review to three policy experts, two of whom also work in the field of refugee studies. Based on their recommendations, I revised the document for greater clarity and accuracy.

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