



Settling In

REFUGEES
IN NELSON
October 2012

New Zealand – Our New Home

Bhutan bata aayoun, Burma bata aayoun
New Zealand ma aaii gharbara bassayoun
*We came from Bhutan, we came from Burma,
And made New Zealand our new home*

Farak chha vaasa farak chha sanskriti
tai pani swagat chha
aa-aafnai ves-vusa, aa-aafnai astitwa
sabai lai samman chha
*Despite differences in language and culture,
We are welcomed to this beautiful country
Having the freedom to preserve culture;
Costumes and identity.*

Congo bata aayoun, Vietnam bata aayoun
New Zealand ma aaii gharbara bassayoun
*We came from Congo, we came from Vietnam,
And made New Zealand our new home*

Adhikar haryo,gharbara haryo
haryo ni sarbas-swa
sabai thok hamro hari sakey pani
aajhai chha vabisya
*Stripped were our rights, our property seized
Everything was taken from us
But we still see our future in the land of
The long white cloud.*

Iran bata aayoun, Iraq bata aayoun,
New Zealand ma aaii gharbara basayoun
*We came from Iran, we came from Iraq
And we made New Zealand our new home.*

*An original song composed by Tika Regmi and sung by Bhutanese community members
on World Refugee Day Celebration, 20 June 2012 at the launch of 'New Beginnings –
Refugee Stories Nelson', at the Elma Turner Library, Nelson.*



Contents

Foreword	I	4. Progress to Date and Priority	
Summary	1	Actions.....	74
1. Introduction.....	5	4.1 Progress and Achievements.....	74
1.1 Background to this Report.....	5	4.2 Priority Actions for the next	
1.2 Purpose.....	6	12 months	74
1.3 Process.....	7	5. References	75
1.4 Scope	8	Appendices	76
1.5 Acknowledgements.....	8	1 Background to this 'Settling In	
1.6 Disclaimer	9	Refugees in Nelson' project	76
2. Context	10	2 Service Directory - Services	
2.1 What is a refugee?.....	10	working alongside refugee	
2.2 Background to refugee		background people in Nelson	77
settlement in Nelson	10	3 Diagram of English language	
2.3 An overview of refugee service		training provision for adults	
development in Nelson	12	in Nelson.....	80
2.4 Collaboration between		4 Background to Burmese and	
local agencies and services	14	Bhutanese refugees (Department	
2.5 Current demographics of former		of Labour resource).....	81
refugee communities in Nelson.....	15		
2.6 Successes for Nelson.....	15		
3. Key Findings	18		
3.1 Access to Services	19		
3.2 Families, Children, Youth			
and Older People.....	29		
3.3 Appreciation of Diversity	35		
3.4 Healthy Lifestyle	42		
3.5 Safety and Security	50		
3.6 Knowledge and Skills	57		
3.7 Economic Wellbeing	67		



Foreword



Nelson has a vision to be a friendly city that welcomes newcomers with open arms. We promote 'unity in diversity' in this vibrant corner at the top of the South Island that offers the best of rural and urban living in New Zealand.

We aim to make settling into our charming city, with its heritage and cultural attractions, education opportunities, shopping and cafes, and beautiful outdoors, as stress-free and easy as possible.

As one of only six refugee settlement areas in New Zealand, Nelson is leading the way when it comes to achieving this goal. The Nelson community has a wide range of agencies working together to do a wonderful job assisting refugees in many different ways. Refugee communities themselves are active in supporting new arrivals from their countries as well so that families can reunite to live happily in Nelson after years of being torn apart by war and other trauma.

Our local community also offers amazing support, welcoming former refugees into the neighbourhood and helping them set up their new homes with donated furniture and other household goods.

Here in Nelson we recognise that those who settle successfully make a significant contribution to the region's economic growth and form an integral part of our local identity.

It is our diversity and cultural difference which makes Nelson an interesting and exciting place to live. Our increasing ethnic population contributes to the tapestry of our city across so many areas. We truly are multicultural and the richer for it.

This report provides an insight into the experiences of former refugees in Nelson. It highlights what we're doing well and helps us better understand challenges in the resettlement process.

I hope that all who read it make a personal commitment to ensure settling into our community is a positive experience for all new Nelsonians.

- Nelson Mayor Aldo Miccio

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to Nelson Mayor Aldo Miccio.

"I urge you to celebrate the extraordinary courage and contributions of refugees past and present."

- Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General

Summary

INTRODUCTION

Background to this report

Refugees have been settling in Nelson since the 1970s and there are currently around 750 former refugees and family members living here with a range of services to support them. Former refugee communities in Nelson primarily include people of Nepalese ethnicity (originally from Bhutan) and people of several different ethnic groups from Burma (Myanmar) as well as Vietnamese and Cambodian people. Refugees are commonly survivors of traumatic events in their home countries and they may have suffered years of deprivation and separation from close family members. There is much to suggest that Nelson is a warm and welcoming place for refugees to settle but it is also clear that the rapid growth in this community brings many challenges and opportunities for these newcomers, and also for the wider Nelson community.

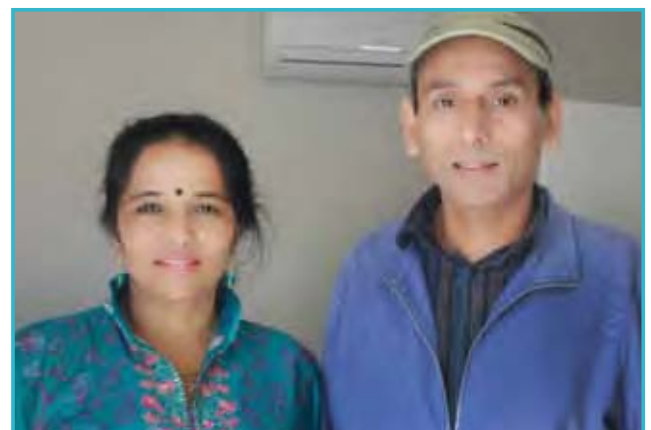
A number of local agencies have been working with refugee communities for some time and there are several collaborative projects currently in operation. Service delivery and support for former refugees in Nelson is characterised by effective collaboration and it is because of these close working relationships that this Settling In project came about. It became apparent that the former refugee community was growing and yet there was no overarching picture about the different groups living here now. In addition, no-one had ever systematically asked former refugees about their settlement experiences in Nelson. It was felt that it would be timely to bring all of the information about former refugees together and to consider issues for these residents more holistically, with a view to ensuring that Nelson is able to offer them a safe and happy new home and that they are able to participate

in their new community and contribute their unique skills and perspectives.

Purpose and process

The main purpose of this report is to highlight key issues for former refugees who have settled in Nelson and to identify needs, gaps in services and suggestions for further action. It is also anticipated that this process will inform the local community and those working closely with former refugees about better ways of working with and supporting these communities. The information used to shape this report came from a range of sources, including: relevant research and reports; conversations and interviews with interested parties; and, most importantly, discussion groups with local former refugees – involving around 140 participants from Burmese Zomi, Burmese Kayan, Burmese Chin, Bhutanese-Nepali and Khmer Krom backgrounds. A number of representatives from different government and non-government agencies working with former refugees in Nelson also participated in focus groups and discussions.

A working group including representatives from local agencies and community groups has overseen the development of the report and will support the ongoing implementation of identified actions.



CONTEXT

Service delivery and success factors

As increasing numbers of refugees have settled in Nelson, services have evolved to provide appropriate support and to maximise settlement outcomes for former refugee families and communities. As a designated refugee resettlement destination, Nelson is home to a branch of Refugee Services Aotearoa NZ which supports a number of paid staff and a pool of local volunteers. Alongside Refugee Services is the very active Nelson Multicultural Council, English Language Partners, Settling In and a host of government and non-government agencies who work together very effectively to support local refugee communities.

Collaboration between local services is a key feature of Nelson and a critical success factor. The size of Nelson, the strong working relationships and the willingness to pool resources and expertise has resulted in many innovative joint initiatives and local successes. These include: recent projects under IGNITE (funded by Ministry of Social Development, administered by the Nelson Multicultural Council in collaboration with many others); the ongoing success of Victory Primary School, Victory Community Centre and Victory Health Centre (providing quality education to former refugee children and wrap-around support to their families); the co-location of key services in central Nelson (promoting easy access to services and support); and local working groups such as the *Looking Back Moving Forward* - Refugee Health & Wellbeing Forum.

Particular issues for former refugees

It has become apparent to those working with former refugee communities in Nelson

that there are increasing numbers of new arrivals with high and complex needs as well as emerging issues for longer term residents, largely as a result of undiagnosed or untreated health concerns. As a small city, Nelson is not always resourced to deal with some of these more complicated issues.

The specific issues faced by refugees vary immensely depending on the journey each refugee has experienced; however, many are likely to have experienced physical, emotional and social trauma to some degree. A refugee is unlikely to speak fluent English (if at all) and may have enormous difficulty trusting officials and accessing even the most basic services that they need without support. They may also have a range of additional health needs on account of their experiences prior to arrival and these may not be well understood by local health professionals. For some refugee communities, meeting their spiritual needs in a small New Zealand city can prove very challenging. Priority issues for former refugees often include:

- language and communication barriers and a lack of interpreter services
- barriers to employment and training due to language issues, disrupted education, lack of confidence and employer discrimination
- complex health issues requiring a collaborative approach, wrap-around services and specialist attention
- building capability and leadership within their communities
- developing cohesive pathways and opportunities to participate and contribute meaningfully to their new communities.

KEY FINDINGS

A number of findings emerged from the consultation and research activities in relation to former refugees in Nelson. The findings are clustered into different areas of focus that look at the key issues, what is working well currently and suggested further actions. The most significant overarching issues for former refugees in Nelson concern the following:

- increasing numbers of refugee arrivals with high and complex needs and emerging health issues for longer term residents
- increasing pressure on Nelson as a settlement area now that no new refugees are being settled in Christchurch, including pressure on the housing market
- Transport concerns – including obtaining a New Zealand driver's licence and using public transport (vital for accessing services and participating in the community)
- More support needed around parenting in the New Zealand context
- Changes to Work and Income requirements - presenting new challenges and opportunities for refugees and their families (eg around work availability)
- Difficulties with the transition from intensive, targeted Refugee Services assistance (for the first six months) to general support
- The need for sustainable, quality interpreting services
- Safety and security concerns – particularly around alcohol misuse and family violence.



PRIORITY ACTIONS

Priority actions have been identified to help address some of these issues. These have been developed as 'report cards' within the body of this report (including agreed outcomes, success measures, actions and key partners). Following the launch of this report, Settling In will support the working group to progress these actions in collaboration with identified key partners.

1. Access to Services

Action: Secure sustainable funding to ensure ongoing access to quality interpreting services for mainstream organisations in Nelson

2. Families, children, youth & older people

Action: Work collaboratively to support happy families in stable communities with a focus on positive parenting

3. Appreciation of Diversity

Action: Develop strategies to increase the numbers of former refugee people engaging with the Nelson host community and local activities

4. Healthy Lifestyle

Action: Work with local health and education providers to ensure more support for refugee youth around mental health issues, including education at schools

5. Safety and Security

Action: Improve feelings of safety for the former refugee population of Nelson

6. Knowledge and Skills

Action: Improve opportunities for developing English language skills and increase local understanding of the vital impact language acquisition has on positive settlement

7. Economic Wellbeing

Action: Improve access to meaningful employment including increased opportunities for women to work once their children are at school



1. Introduction

1.1 Background to this Report

Refugees have been coming to Nelson since the 1970s and it is just over 20 years since a formal group was established to support their settlement here. This group went through many shifts and developments – evolving to become Refugee Services Aotearoa New Zealand in 2007 once Nelson was formally designated as a refugee resettlement area. Nelson is the smallest of the designated refugee settlement communities in New Zealand, after Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington (including Hutt Valley and Porirua), Christchurch, and Palmerston North.

Over the last five years the size of the former refugee community in Nelson has steadily increased with regular intakes of new arrivals from off-shore and also as a result of families growing - with new babies arriving and extended family members joining their relatives. It is estimated that there are currently around 750 former refugees living in Nelson, predominantly people of Nepalese ethnicity originally from Bhutan and people of several different ethnic groups from Burma (Myanmar) as well as Vietnamese and Cambodian people. A further Refugee Quota intake of 70-75 people from Nepal and Burma is expected in 2012.

There is much to indicate that Nelson is a warm and welcoming place for refugees to settle but it is also clear that the rapid growth in this community brings many challenges and opportunities for refugees and their families, and also for the wider Nelson community. Receiving communities benefit immensely from their civic contribution to this international humanitarian project and from the diversity and positive contributions that these very special people make within their new home. Refugees are commonly

survivors of horrendous events in their home countries and they may have suffered years of deprivation and separation from close family members. However, it has been noted by those working with former refugees in Nelson that they invariably arrive with great optimism and an overwhelmingly positive approach – they embrace the community and the lifestyle offered here despite the immense settlement challenges that they face. In accepting refugees to New Zealand, there is an implicit responsibility on the part of the host community to ensure that these newcomers are made to feel welcome here, and supported to achieve social wellbeing and opportunities to contribute within their new home environment.

There is a pleasingly high level of collaboration amongst agencies in Nelson offering all sorts of support to the former refugee community. Key organisations include Refugee Services Aotearoa NZ (Refugee Services), Nelson Multicultural Council (NMC), English Language Partners (ELP), Settling In (Family and Community Services, MSD), Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT), New Zealand Police, Nelson Bays Community Law Service, Victory Primary School, Victory Community Health, Nelson Refugee Forum and many others. It was as a result of the strong working relationships amongst these groups that this project developed. It became clear that there was not a current overarching picture about the former refugee groups that are living here now – the exact numbers, age groups, family composition and their general life situation – and no-one had ever systematically asked former refugees to tell 'Nelson' about their settlement experiences here. This Settling In project and report has provided a framework to gather, record and respond to this information.

In general, those former refugees consulted during the development of this report present a very positive picture of their life in Nelson, but they also highlight ways that life could be made easier. In particular they provide some very useful insights into how different agencies could make their services more responsive to the special needs of this community.

A recurring theme throughout focus groups and conversations within the former refugee sector is:

“we are not victims – we are survivors!”



1.2 Purpose

The ‘Settling In Refugees in Nelson’ project has provided the first extensive opportunity to gather information about the whole former refugee community living here. This information is incredibly useful – it helps to better inform local agencies and the wider community about the needs of the former refugee community. The process for gathering information is also very important, providing a formal opportunity for refugees to offer their thoughts and opinions – in effect ‘giving a voice’ to refugees.

The value of this process is highlighted by the changes that occurred during the development of this report as a result of new information, in particular around well-meaning services struggling to connect with this ‘hard to reach group’ and understand all of the complexities involved. For example, it was revealed that many former refugee women have not been accessing ante-natal care that they are entitled to because of language barriers and because they do not understand the systems here. Since this issue was highlighted, a group of associated services and midwives have been working together to ensure that former refugee women who are currently pregnant are able to access appropriate antenatal care.

This example underscores the fundamental purpose of this report - to contribute to positive change and better conditions for the wider refugee community and to build ongoing relationships amongst these groups and different agencies so they can access the support they need and convey emerging and changing needs as they occur.

1.3 Process

The opportunity to undertake this report came about following the establishment of the IGNITE¹ project in Nelson. This project is funded through the Community Response Fund, and focuses on supporting work with the refugee sector in Nelson. In discussion with the IGNITE Working Party it was agreed that a Settling In process identifying critical settlement issues, successes and gaps would be timely and would help to provide direction in terms of future priorities and investment. Settling In (Family and Community Services, MSD) has been responsible for the project management and writing of this report and for funding the focus group and report development process. IGNITE provided funding for printing and designing the report.

Getting recent data about the different former refugee communities in Nelson was an important but challenging first step. This level of detail is not easily available through government statistics and so one of the first tasks was to gather demographic information from the different refugee communities themselves. Following on from this initial contact, the next critical undertaking was to get groups of former refugees together and provide interpreters and support so they could offer their views about their life and experiences in New Zealand. Twenty one focus groups were held over a six month period, 11 with refugee communities and 10 with key agencies and individuals working alongside refugee communities in Nelson.

The focus groups undertaken with refugee communities included 139 individuals from Burmese Zomi, Burmese Kayan, Burmese Chin, Bhutanese-Nepali and Khmer Krom backgrounds. Representatives from Nelson Marlborough District Health Board, Public Health, New Zealand Police, Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology, Refugee Services Aotearoa New Zealand, Nelson Multicultural Council, Work and Income, Victory Primary School and Victory Community Health were involved in the focus groups and discussions with agencies / service providers. The focus group process is invariably challenging and time consuming; however this process was made easier due to the efforts of Denise Hutterd from Settling In who has extensive experience and connections with the former refugee community in Nelson and was instrumental in bringing many of the groups together.

The *Looking Back Moving Forward* - Refugee Health & Wellbeing Forum (LBMF) is a multi-agency group that meets six weekly with the purpose of improving the health and wellbeing of Nelson's former refugee communities². The forum members were pivotal in accessing isolated women, older people and others who would not otherwise have participated in such a process. LBMF also provided peer support and peer review for the content and development of this report.

¹ Ignite is a 2 year project funded by the Community Response Fund (Ministry of Social Development). The project sits under the umbrella of the Nelson Multicultural Council. Ignite aims to increase the participation of former refugees in social, educative and community programmes, and also looks at new initiatives that address the gaps to meet the settlement needs of the refugee communities in Nelson.

² Areas covered by LBMF include: Health, Education, Employment, Social, Youth, Elderly, Women, Refugee forum update.

The working group for this project includes:

- Refugee Services Aotearoa NZ
- Victory Primary School
- Nelson Multicultural Council
- Settling In
- Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology
- Nelson Refugee Forum representatives
- English Language Partners
- IGNITE coordinator
- Family Start
- Stopping Violence Services
- Nelson College
- New Zealand Police
- Victory Community Health
- Other organisations by invitation

Further information about the Settling In process for this report is outlined in Appendix 1.

1.4 Scope

Engaging with refugee communities is notoriously difficult due to language difficulties and general lack of availability due to their busy lives, working and fulfilling family responsibilities. Much of the 'free time' for these groups is taken up with family commitments and religious and community events, limiting their availability for focus group participation. Ideally, there would have been more focus groups with youth and other 'hard to reach' groups such as the elderly, and it may be that further research is undertaken with these groups at a later stage.

This report provides a snapshot of 'how life

is' for former refugees in Nelson in 2012. It is largely based on qualitative information gathered during the focus group and consultation process. During the time this report was being compiled several big issues arose including the tragic suicide of a member of the Zomi community, and the impact of the earthquakes in Christchurch, which resulted in a surge of people moving to Nelson putting more pressure on an already difficult rental housing market.

This report is intended to be a dynamic document which will guide future service development and provide a cohesive working framework to enhance the lives of former refugees in Nelson as the community grows and changes.

1.5 Acknowledgements

Thank you to the leaders of the different refugee communities without whose help this report could not have gone ahead. While it was time consuming and difficult for some community representatives to get involved, many made considerable effort to engage their friends and families to make sure their voices were heard. Family Start, Victory Primary School, English Language Partners and Nelson Multicultural Council were especially helpful, holding focus groups with their learner groups. Many thanks to Denise Hutterd for her patience, perseverance and success in getting focus groups organised and engaged with the Settling In process.



A special acknowledgement to Refugee Services Aotearoa NZ staff who were generous with their time and insights, providing really useful information for this report.

Thank you to the *Looking Back Moving Forward* forum for their contributions and peer review of the drafts for the report - their expertise and enthusiasm for the project is much appreciated.

Lastly, particular mention must go to the Nelson Multicultural Council who manage the IGNITE project and had the vision and foresight to support this report.

1.6 Disclaimer

This report documents the opinions and views expressed by participants at focus group meetings held in Nelson. Note that these are personal statements, reflecting individual perceptions and experiences. They are not the viewpoints of the 'Settling In Refugees in Nelson' working group, working group members or the organisations that they represent.



2. Context

2.1 What is a refugee?

A refugee is defined as:

"... a person who, owing to a 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."

(The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees)

New Zealand's first major involvement in refugee resettlement began in November 1944 when the American vessel General Randall arrived from war-torn Europe with 733 Polish children and 108 adults on board. Since then there has been a history of goodwill towards refugee survivors beginning a new life here, with our refugee policy reflecting the government's commitment to fulfilling its international humanitarian obligations and responsibilities as a signatory to the United Nations 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees³.

2.2 Background to refugee settlement in Nelson

Arrival in New Zealand

Each year the New Zealand government welcomes a quota of 750 refugees. All refugees accepted by New Zealand under the Refugee Quota Programme complete a six-week orientation and assessment programme at the Mangere Refugee Centre in Auckland. All quota refugees are permanent residents of New Zealand and are eligible for a range

of benefits and supplementary allowances on arrival. They enjoy the same rights as any other New Zealand permanent resident in the areas of education, health, employment, and social welfare. After five years, they may apply for New Zealand citizenship.

New Zealand has indicated to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) that it is prepared to accept refugees with high and complex needs whereas some other receiving countries prefer to focus on refugees with more immediate potential for integration into the host community and economy. While most refugees have suffered trauma and the consequences of forced dislocation from their homelands, the refugees with high and complex needs accepted by New Zealand include victims of torture, women at risk, those with physical disabilities and some with serious health issues. Consequently there is a high need for mental health services for these refugees when they settle in their host city.

During their time in Mangere, new arrivals receive a range of services and support. Refugees As Survivors (RAS) provides counselling and therapeutic services to any refugees who are showing early signs of mental illness. After the six week period refugees are resettled in locations around New Zealand. The choice of location is based on a variety of considerations including availability of housing, location of communities of a similar ethnicity and residence of any previously arrived family members.

Refugee settlement in Nelson – a brief history and overview

The first wave of refugees in Nelson came from Vietnam and Cambodia from the late

³Information from Refugee Services Aotearoa NZ Website (www.refugeeservices.org.nz)

1970s through until the mid 1990s following the wars in those countries. Numbers grew considerably during the 1990s – arrivals were Vietnamese, Cambodian, Burmese and Khmer Krom, a family from Sri Lanka, one person from Rwanda and one from Pakistan. Asylum seekers from Chechnya China, Vietnam, Russia, Cambodia and Azerbaijan and Iran also came at this time.

In 1994 there were two single Burmese refugees who settled here and three sizeable groups of Khmer Krom refugees originally from Vietnam who came to Nelson, most of whom have stayed in the Nelson/Tasman area. Some left for Auckland and Australia. Through to 1999, a number of Cambodian, Khmer Krom and Vietnamese came to Nelson, as well as their family members (under Family Reunification). Thirteen Vietnamese refugees arrived in 1999.

In 2001 a sizeable group of 47 Burmese refugees came to Nelson. They had all come out of Thailand and were in family groups. Several others came down from Auckland while others went up to Auckland because of internal problems within the community.

In 2003, seven Chin, a Rohingya family and two single Rohingya came to Nelson. The Rohingya returned to Auckland as they were Muslim and they wanted a Mosque. Two men came down from Auckland who were Rakhine. These groups all came originally from Burma (Myanmar).

In 2004, four unaccompanied minor boys – one Burmese Chin and three Burmese, came to Nelson. In 2005 one unaccompanied minor – Burmese Karen (Kayin) arrived and knew the previous four. All of these boys had special issues that required a considerable investment of time. Their particularly complex needs created significant challenges both for

themselves and their new community, with two of them later committing suicide and another currently in a very fragile state.

At the end of 2005 the first Chin family members accepted under family reunification regulations arrived. In 2006, there were continuous intakes of Chin including the arrival of groups of single men. Single Chin men have continued to come to Nelson with most now having family ties here. Single men and women without their spouses and children or with no other family members have had special difficulties adjusting including anxiety about family, depression, and alcohol misuse (often as a coping mechanism or as self medication).

In 2007 one Burmese family arrived alongside the ongoing Chin intakes.

The most sizeable groups of refugees in Nelson today are from Bhutan and Burma.

The Burmese Community in Nelson

The Burmese community in Nelson consists of the following ethnic groups:

- Burmese
- Karen (Kayin)
- Kayan
- Zomi
- Chin
- Rakhine (language is Arakanese)

The language groups are Burmese, Karen, Lai, Tedim, Haka, Zophei, and Mizo.

The Bhutanese Community in Nelson

The Bhutanese-Nepali are Nelson's most recently arrived community. Most are Lhotshampa people from southern Bhutan

and came from a farming background. In the late 1980s the Bhutanese Government began to suppress the religion, language, culture and dress of the Lhotshampa people. Peaceful demonstrations led to repressive and violent retaliation and within two years 120,000 people had been forced to leave Bhutan to escape imprisonment and/or death. Members of the Nelson community began arriving in 2009 and the community now numbers 112 people. All came from refugee camps in Nepal, where they had spent around 18 years⁴.

Further information about these communities is provided in Appendix 4.

2.3 An overview of refugee service development in Nelson

Introduction

There has been a degree of formalised support for refugee newcomers in Nelson since the first arrivals came in the 1970s. Refugee Services Aotearoa NZ has evolved from a church based group of volunteers in the mid-70s to a professional organisation with enthusiastic and qualified staff who welcome and support increasing numbers of refugees to Nelson. The professional staff are backed by a large team of volunteers and considerable support from the wider Nelson community. This includes landlords who are willing to give refugee families a chance, and local residents who provide furniture, bedding and donations of household goods so that these newcomers can establish homes here.

Refugee Services Aotearoa NZ has successfully engaged the local Nelson community and works alongside a range of other agencies to maximise the outcomes for refugees coming to live in Nelson. Nelson has been particularly fortunate in that there has been considerable

continuity in terms of the personnel involved with refugees over time and so there is a great deal of institutional and local knowledge residing in local services. A brief history and overview of refugee service development in Nelson is outlined below.

The first refugee service in Nelson – the ICCI

In 1975, the Inter Church Commission for Immigration (ICCI) was established in response to the first wave of Vietnamese refugees coming to New Zealand – it aimed to represent New Zealand churches in all aspects of immigration and the settlement of refugees.

The founding members included representatives from the National Council of Churches, the Catholic Bishops Conference, HIAS (Hebrew Immigration Aid Society) and the United Synagogues of New Zealand. The work of the Commission largely focussed on refugee matters, but it also actively assisted a wide range of migrants and people applying for political asylum.

ICCI was set up to utilise the good will of churches and parishioners in different parts of New Zealand who assisted refugees with finding and furnishing homes, and by providing practical support. Nelson became a part of the ICCI re-settlement process and a coordinator was appointed, who worked with the Churches in Nelson. The coordinator and sponsors worked in a voluntary capacity and normally worked with an additional two - three volunteers per family.

Refugee and Migrant Service

In the 1980s it became evident that people other than Christians wished to become involved in assisting refugees with their settlement in Nelson and so the service was

⁴Information taken from the 'New Beginnings' publication

extended to include the wider community and local volunteers were actively encouraged to participate. The majority of the refugees assisted at this time were originally from Vietnam and Cambodia and it was quite common for these groups to shift elsewhere in New Zealand after their initial resettlement, for example to Auckland, or beyond to Australia.

Nelson Refugee Assistance

In 1991, a Nelson Refugee Assistance committee was formed in order to apply for a paid coordinator to help manage the needs of the expanding refugee community in Nelson. The Department of Social Welfare (as it was called at that time) provided funding to appoint Denise Hutterd who was employed as coordinator for the 16 years Nelson Refugee Assistance was in existence. During this time there was often a focus on 'women at risk' and some more difficult cases. Nelson was widely acknowledged as having a very supportive local community and providing excellent outcomes. At this time there were around 30 resident refugees, mainly from Vietnam and Cambodia with some quota refugees and family reunion cases as well as several asylum seekers who arrived here off fishing boats in Nelson and from other parts of the country. Some were referred to Auckland and others were assisted in Nelson. In addition to the re-settlement work with refugees, the coordinator completed the immigration applications for family reunification cases and helped asylum seekers with tasks such as filling out application forms for asylum, finding accommodation and general support.

Members of the Bahai faith also helped to support some Nelson based refugees (mostly Iranian), at times working closely with Nelson Refugee Assistance.

Alongside these services was a highly dedicated and effective pool of volunteers who provided a range of practical support for refugees settling in Nelson.

RMS Refugee Resettlement Inc (formerly Refugee and Migrant Service)

In 2006, RMS Refugee Resettlement Inc replaced Nelson Refugee Assistance so that the service became consistent with the rest of the country. In June 2008 the organisation was rebranded as Refugee Services Aotearoa New Zealand. Nelson staff then consisted of a Coordinator, a Volunteer Support Worker Trainer, a Social Worker and a Cross-Cultural Worker (all part-time positions).

Refugee Services Aotearoa NZ - Nelson

In July 2008, Gabrielle Humphreys was appointed as the full-time Area Manager. Since then staff hours across all the strands of the service have been increased, as funding has permitted, to develop the local operation. The current staff structure includes:

Social Work:

Social Worker, Case Worker

Cross-cultural work:

Cross-cultural Workers / Interpreters

Volunteer Programme:

Coordinator, Supervisor, Housing Liaison, Furniture Services Coordinator, Volunteer Support Workers

Refugee Services Nelson receives 9-10% of the national quota of UNHCR registered former refugees. Intakes of new families occur every eight weeks, i.e. six times, per year. Each family is supported by a team of (usually four) Volunteer Support Workers, many of whom have worked with multiple families. Approximately 50 new Support Workers are

trained each year.

Mental Health Services and Support

As noted, many of the refugees who come to New Zealand have high and complex needs, including significant mental health issues. Mental health services for refugees are well established in Auckland, Christchurch and the greater Wellington region. In an initiative facilitated by the Mental Health Commission, the Wellington Refugees as Survivors Trust (RAS) was established in 1997 to provide the service in the greater Wellington region. Currently there are no services covering Hamilton, Palmerston North and Nelson (also designated refugee resettlement cities). This is considered to be a significant service gap in Nelson.

General Services

A Nelson service directory (of services for those from refugee backgrounds) and a diagram of local services, produced by Settling In, is attached as Appendix 2.

2.4 Collaboration between local agencies and services

Alongside the development of a dedicated refugee service, there has also been significant growth and development within the wider migrant and refugee sector. This has been accompanied by increasing knowledge and recognition of the specific needs of the refugee communities residing in Nelson and the interventions and assistance that help to support their settlement.

A particular feature, and success factor, in Nelson, has been the strong working relationships that have developed amongst those working in this sector. As a result of this longstanding local collaboration a number of joint initiatives and projects have

been possible. Ideas, time and resources are commonly pooled, maximising the outcomes for former refugees and migrants living here.

At the centre of this network is the Nelson Multicultural Council which is now a thriving entity based in the Nelson Multicultural Resource Centre, where it operates alongside English Language Partners, the Nelson Newcomers Network and Settling In. Joint initiatives such as the IGNITE project and the *Looking Back Moving Forward* forum are opportunities for a wide range of agencies to meet and align their services to be responsive and appropriate for the needs of refugees. An example of local commitment was the one day forum with Dr Love Chile in June 2012 on “Working across cultures in the prevention of family violence”. This session was sponsored by Te Rito Family Violence Network and IGNITE and attracted about 200 people including medical professionals, social workers, lawyers and many other agencies wanting to gain an understanding of working in a culturally appropriate setting. Victory Primary School, Victory Community Centre and Victory Health Centre are other local examples of services collaborating to offer friendly and accessible opportunities for former refugees who see this as a comfortable and helpful part of their settlement in Nelson.

The impact of creating and maintaining collaborative networks is also clearly visible among training providers in Nelson. Learning English is a keystone to all facets of the lives of settlers in Nelson, and good English facilitates access to services and information, independence, engagement with the community and work and study opportunities. Training providers have worked together to create a meaningful and effective network of provision, maximising the number of funded

places available to the Nelson former refugee community and providing relevant training that is fit for purpose. The creation and maintenance of the good working relationship and cross referrals between these agencies is

recognised nationally as a model of success by other regions and key stakeholders, such as the Tertiary Education Commission. See Appendix 3 for a diagram of the Nelson ESOL Network of Provision.

2.5 Current demographics of former refugee communities in Nelson

GROUP	MALE	FEMALE	FAMILIES	TOTAL
Zomi	9	7	4	16
Chin	179	157	73	336
Kayan	27	28		55
Burmese	16	26	5	42
Bhutanese-Nepali	48	64		112
Karen	6	4		10
Khmer Krom / Kampuchea	77	46	37	123
Vietnamese	20	39	13	72
Afghani	2			2
			TOTAL	768

Demographics as at end of October 2012⁵ (compiled in consultation with community leaders)

2.6 Successes for Nelson

Nelson enjoys a high level of success with former refugees in terms of the quality of services available, the cooperation amongst these services and the willingness of the wider community to accept and appreciate the diversity and vitality that these newcomers bring. Some of the key successes identified during this Settling In project with respect to the settlement of former refugees in Nelson have been noted below:

- Many happy, well settled former refugee families and individuals
- High levels of participation by former refugees in Nelson community festivals and events, as well as the creation of their own cultural celebrations
- Many successful multicultural / ethnic festivals and events
- The establishment of the Nelson Refugee Forum
- Improved access to interpreter training through a collaborative course offered through NMIT and CPIT with funding provided by IGNITE
- Targeted antenatal care
- A local publication - *New Beginnings Refugee Stories - Nelson*
- Targeted resources – eg *Healthy Living in New Zealand: Nutrition & Oral Health* DVD
- Formation of incorporated societies by various ethnic communities e.g. Chin, Zomi, Bhutanese-Nepali and Kayan

⁵This level of detail is not easily available through Census data and other government statistics

- Increasing interest and success with home ownership
- Increased visibility of the refugee community on the streets of Nelson and in the community in general
- Increasing interest and success with business ownership
- Many former refugees are participating and achieving at different levels of education including tertiary level education
- higher rates of employment for former refugees in Nelson (compared to the national average)
- Nelson Multicultural Council success in receiving Community Response Funding (CRF) over two years enabling the development of the IGNITE project
- The variety of programmes and support that has been available to the former refugees due to CRF funding
- Department of Internal Affairs funding for three years to Refugee Services Aotearoa NZ enabling the employment of a community development worker
- Refugee families successful in getting Habitat for Humanity homes
- Language maintenance classes initiated and run by the different refugee groups
- Support from funders such as Lottery Grants Board, COGS, Canterbury Community Trust, for refugee groups
- Effective interagency collaboration and local networks
- Increased focus on mental health concerns for former refugees eg Refugee Services has run a range of education workshops with Mental Health services (Nelson Marlborough District Health Board) local health professionals in relation to meeting the needs of former refugee clients
- Family Start service available to former refugees
- Appointment of a NZ Police Ethnic Liaison Officer in Nelson
- Positive support from mainstream services e.g. Red Cross
- Good collaboration between the education sector and Refugee Services leading to clearer pathways for refugees with low levels of literacy to move towards employment or improved employability
- Strong volunteer pool to assist Refugee Services with settling former refugees in their first six months.



IGNITE – a local success - supporting former refugees in Nelson

IGNITE is a project that sits under the umbrella of the Nelson Multicultural Council. It received funding in 2010 and 2012 from the Community Response Fund, a Ministry of Social Development fund.

The aim of IGNITE is to improve employment outcomes and social connectedness for former refugees in Nelson by increasing their participation in social, educative and community programmes, and by providing targeted initiatives and support to address identified gaps.

IGNITE is liaising and consulting with refugee communities and community stakeholders, to identify ways of implementing the project.

Priority areas for funding:

- Prevention of family violence
- Early intervention for vulnerable and at risk children and families
- Families under stress
- Young people who are vulnerable and at risk
- Older people who are vulnerable and at risk

Three main project areas were sponsored by IGNITE:

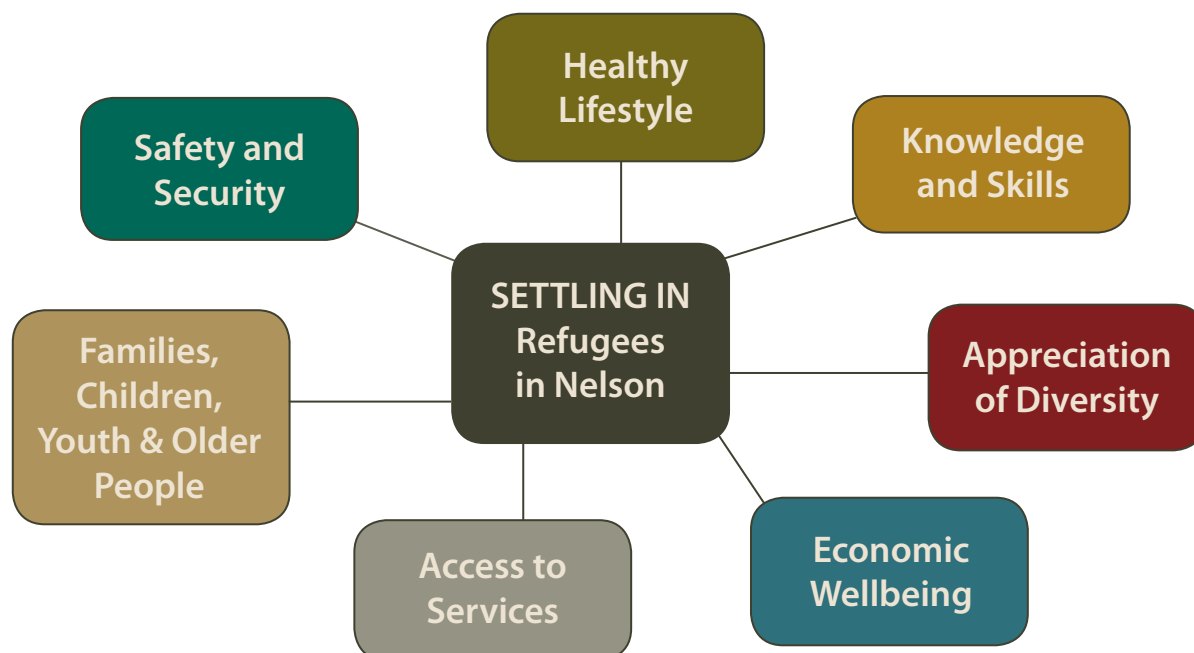
1. **Interpreting** – including funding interpreters / translation for specific purposes and providing training to upskill local interpreters
2. **Driver Licence training** - assisting former refugees to improve driving skills, increase their knowledge of the Road Code, improve road awareness as a driver, cyclist, or pedestrian, and gain various driving licences
3. **Prevention of family violence** – a number of initiatives which work towards the stopping of family violence including parenting support programmes, interpreters for those on Stopping Violence courses, sponsoring Dr Love Chile to work in Nelson

A number of smaller projects have also been supported, such as Haircutting, Cookery, Car Mechanics, First Aid, which were all requested by the community.

Feedback from monitoring and evaluation processes has been very positive and the dividends from this project are evident in a range of areas.

3. Key Findings

A number of findings emerged from the consultation and focus group process. These findings have been clustered within the following areas of focus:



This information provides a basis from which to determine priorities for future investment to improve the settling in process for former refugees and their families in Nelson.

A summary of key issues for former refugees in Nelson

- An increasing numbers of refugee arrivals with high and complex needs and emerging health issues for longer term residents
- The increasing pressure on Nelson as a settlement area now no new refugees are being settled in Christchurch, including pressure on the housing market
- Transport concerns – including obtaining a New Zealand driver’s licence and using public transport (vital for accessing services and participating in the community)
- More support needed around parenting in the New Zealand context
- Changes to Work and Income requirements - presenting new challenges and opportunities for refugees and their families (eg around work availability)
- Difficulties with the transition from intensive, targeted Refugee Services assistance (for the first six months) to general support
- The need for sustainable, quality interpreting services
- Safety and security concerns – particularly around alcohol misuse and family violence

3.1 ACCESS TO SERVICES

Introduction

“It is good on a fine day but it is difficult for us when we have to walk the children to school in the rain. If we have babies, it is difficult to get there in time sometimes.”

‘People often don’t know who to approach for help with personal or social problems’

‘Poor reading and writing makes it difficult to access services such as bank, post office, clinic, hospital’

All newcomers face challenges when they first arrive in a new community – finding out the critical information that they need to know and tapping into the services and support that is available. Immediate settlement priorities such as finding a suitable and affordable home, enrolling children in local schools, understanding how public transport works and finding a doctor can be complicated and time consuming. Of course these tasks are much more difficult to undertake if you do not speak English and do not understand how New Zealand systems work. Other than a small amount of preparation in Mangere, former refugees are unlikely to have any recent experiences to help them undertake these things.

Those former refugees who settle in Nelson are fortunate, however, in that the dedicated services and support here are very active and operate with a high level of cooperation. Refugee Services has staff and a number of volunteers to help with initial settlement requirements (first six months) and this is generally viewed as very helpful and effective. In addition, as a result of earlier Settling In activity, a number of services are now co-located centrally in the Nelson Multicultural Resource Centre on Bridge street; services include Nelson Multicultural Council, Settling

In, New Zealand Newcomers Network, Nelson Newcomers Network and English Language partners. The Nelson Multicultural Council, which is at street level, has a range of useful resources for newcomers and personnel to help direct people to the right places and support. The small size of Nelson also means that it can be easier to find out what you need to know more quickly than it might be in a larger centre. Upon arrival at Mangere former refugees are immediately eligible for any government support, including income support and financial assistance. Another important factor impacting on the ease with which newcomers can access local services is the level and quality of ‘word of mouth’ information sharing between members of different community groups. New arrivals are quickly linked up with other members of their communities or homelands and this is a common way of newcomers getting local ‘intel’ and finding out about New Zealand ways of doing things.

Particular issues for former refugees in Nelson in relation to accessing services include:

- difficulties with transport – the costs and challenges around getting a driver’s licence although many also note that they can walk around the central city easily
- housing – in particular the costs of renting and buying, difficulties accommodating large families and heating concerns
- availability of interpreters to help with interactions with the health system and general communications.

There was considerable positive feedback from former refugees and from local agencies about the increased effectiveness and collaboration between the different support

services in Nelson over recent years. It has been noted by service providers that the level and complexity of needs exhibited by new refugee arrivals is increasing and that some issues

for earlier arrivals are manifesting now with quite serious consequences (eg undiagnosed / untreated mental health issues) – stretching resources and causing considerable concern.

Existing Services and Activities

A number of services, activities and resources are currently available for former refugees to improve their access to local services. Key services include:

Nelson Multicultural Council

- Nelson Multicultural Council fieldworker is available to support people to access appropriate services
- Nelson Multicultural Resource Centre houses a range of resources - targeted and general including:
 - Top 10 Tips for migrants
 - Pamphlet of English Language classes

Nelson Refugee Forum - a place for community representatives and leaders to discuss and raise issues pertaining to refugee people living in the Nelson Tasman region, and to receive community updates.

Nelson Bays Primary Health - provides a contact to Refugee Services Nelson for the provision of interpretation and translation support for Chin and Bhutanese-Nepali languages for any primary health care appointment.

Settling In - funding to Victory Primary School to cover travel expenses enabling

children and youth to attend school and the home work academy

Nelson Bays Community Law - education sessions

Programmes to help refugees get a driver licence

- Work & Income - programme to help refugees progress from learner licence to restricted licence
- English Language Partners - Refugees Road Code course to help people work towards getting their learner licence.
- Refugee Services Aotearoa NZ - volunteers are helping people to move from learner licence to restricted licence

Range of available community spaces

- Refugee community groups are able to use Victory School hall and Victory Community Centre for many community celebrations
- Victory Primary School allows two refugee community groups to hold language maintenance classes in school class rooms

Health Services

- 'Be Well Nurse' based at Victory Community Health

Feedback From Focus Groups⁶

a. Main themes

1. Transport
2. Housing
3. Refugee support services
4. Agency perspective on services for refugees in Nelson
5. Interpreter services

1. Transport

Learning to drive

'Learn to drive for work'

'we have to depend on our husbands to drive. We have to wait for them to find time to teach us.'

'As women, we want to be able to drive'

'I want to learn to practice driving'

'We want to have a driving course'

'We have restricted driver licences and can't drive after 10pm so we have to walk.'

'They are keen on sharing the fee for a driving instructor, eg. If it costs \$60 per hr. for a driving lesson, if driving instructor is ok with 3 students in one car having 20 minutes each of lesson.'

'The women would like more help learning to drive and it would help to get work easier.'

'Some people have licenses but more are driving'

'The women can do more for their families if they can drive'

'Some have Learner, Restricted and Full'

'How can they get their driver's licenses?'

'How can they learn to drive? Who can help them?'

'Some people gain their learner's license without good understanding of rules and conditions'

Transport for children

'We want to get transport to go to school for our children'

'Transport, for children and old people'

Transport for the elderly

'Not as easy for old people to walk'

'Elderly people need a guide to walk around – they can't go from one place to another on their own'

Cost

'Expensive gas, petrol and warrant of fitness'

'As winter comes, cheaper taxis'

'Parking is expensive'

'Many refugee families can't afford to buy a car'

Public transport system

'Because our English is not good it's difficult to use the bus system'

'Problem in language to find out which bus to catch or which stop they need to get off'

'Don't know much about bus service so mostly walk to town'

'Buses don't run late at night'

Getting around Nelson

'It's okay to walk in Nelson city'

'Walking is the only way we have to get

⁶This feedback comprises direct quotes from focus group participants or notes as interpreted and presented by facilitators.

around'

'Parking problems – too expensive, too far to walk'

'Nelson is easy to walk around, small, flat, etc'

'There is only one way and that is to walk!'

'A long way to walk to school and adults' class'

'Difficult to get around when it's raining'

'Transport to appointments e.g. hospital, GP'

'Usually convenient to walk to most places in Nelson'

2. Housing

Renting a house

'Plenty of volunteers and houses – good feedback from letting agencies that Refugee Services does work with about good condition that houses are maintained in.'

'Feb 2012-required four houses and there was immense competitive pressure. For one two-bedroom property applied for, there were also 14 other applications for the same property.'

'It would be good to promote the good support that RS can provide (for refugees renting houses)'

'References for changing house – this is a problem when refugees have no renting history in NZ'

'We want to get housing in NZ'

'90% of refugee housing is provided by private landlords'

'Better housing - 9 out 10 are now on private housing.'

'Nelson RS has never relied on HNZC houses as they do not have the stock required.'

'Market mostly meets the needs'

'Extended families want to live together but the NZ houses aren't big enough and if the houses are big we can't afford to rent them.'

'Dependent on small pool of letting agencies'

'Consistent decline by some'

Cost

'Smaller houses cost almost the same as 3 brm houses'

'Two bedroom close to \$300'

'Refugee Services try to avoid paying letting fees – if that was not the case, a family can need up to \$2,500 up front to shift in'

'Housing more expensive and more competitive since Christchurch earthquake, especially two bedroom places'

'Housing is a problem – too expensive'

'Some of our houses are very expensive and we find that very difficult'

Buying a house

'Learning how to buy a house'

'House prices keep increasing – prevent us from having a house in the future, more difficult to manage our income'

'Be able to own our own house'

Heating

'Heating is a problem – refugees don't want to pay for power and when they are in non-energy efficient homes, there are health risks especially for children'

'NZ houses are damp and cold with no fireplace or we aren't allowed to use the fireplace.'

'We can't afford to turn on the heat pumps.'

'Many want to move from Housing Corp'

into private housing. The houses are so cold and needing repairs. Children are sick, nasty neighbours and steep stairs.'

'Some of the houses are built in the old system without good insulation and no heat pumps and the winter is quite severe for those ,too expensive to burn heater'

'Cold in winter – hard to pay the power bill'

'Cold houses'

'Houses – some have no heat pumps – too cold – too hard to heat'

Other housing issues

'Earthquake has put additional pressure on housing market'

'Stoke is still an option but need right group of families to go out there – this would take some pressure off Victory community and facilities'

'There is a scattering of families in other areas such as the Wood'

'NZ houses are too small for our extended families'

'It is more expensive in private housing and they know they can get Accom Supp and like that a lot better.'

'There are too many family members but not enough rooms in house'

'Because we have big families, it is hard for all of us to live together'

'I would like to have a HNZ house'

'Look at former refugees living in Tasman as well as Nelson, e.g. Stoke, Motueka. This would lessen competition and jealousy'

3. Refugee support services

'Good settlement support from Refugee

Services support workers and Settling In and Nelson Multicultural Council'

'We want to have Family Start for longer. Some of us cannot get into Family Start.'

'Services are very responsive and facilities are really good.'

'RS helped a little - sometimes good, sometimes not so good'

'Lizzie and Tika and Paing Mu and Ali are amazing!!!!'

'Time/pressure'

'Wearing so many hats'

'Touch over lightly'

'Social Work caseworker has made a very positive and significant difference'

'Resettlement issues can be handled more thoroughly now that social worker is freed up to "follow through"'

'Much better resourced than 2 years ago'

'Great staff, balanced skill set'

'Good support from community'

'Media exposure is really good and newsletter helps raise profile of Refugee Services'

'Nelson Mail is good at advertising particular needs, e.g. bedding, kettles - PR works!!'

'Geographical proximity of former refugee community helps to provide good support'

'New CE for Refugee Services has "pushed" Refugee Services into new millennium'

'New database'

'Better stats'

'Appreciation and acknowledgement for good work though salaries are still not good.'

Increasing level of high and complex needs

'Level of care required by new families'

'Bhutanese families coming now are high need – low education. The level of literacy and skills of people left in refugee camps is lower. 58,000 have been settled around the world, approximately 40,000 left and one camp will be closing soon.'

'Remaining Bhutanese coming from camps are more dysfunctional'

'Looking at settlement options for Nepal itself'

'High and complex needs combined with older people creates new demands on services'

'Local services, such as DHB are not aware of this changing situation'

'Possibility of higher quota for Nelson with CHCH not being able to settle new people – Current quota for Nelson is 60 – 70 per annum (10% of NZ quota)'

'More opportunities to attend national hui'

'Need more funding – staff go the extra mile'

'Every role is essential. Any loss of \$\$\$ jeopardises capacity'

'One family arrived 2010 but still need a lot of help – Refugee Services is not funded for this.'

'Social Workers need to go to Mangere to have forewarning of who is coming to Nelson. This would be for 2 days, 5 times per annum and would significantly increase capacity of Refugee Services to prepare and respond to needs of new arrivals.'

Volunteers

'Great relationship with Work and Income'

'There is a good point of contact at Nelson and Richmond offices'

'Good use of interpreters'

'Good supply of volunteers'

'48 volunteers in 3 trainings'

'there are up to 4-5 volunteers for each family'

'extended family can be great help – this helps to empower the whole community – new arrivals now generally have links with existing families'

'some volunteers are former refugees – this can sometimes be a bit of a challenge with local politics'

'retired group and high number of migrants reflects Nelson's diverse population'

'Great volunteers in contrast to Palmerston North where Refugee Services is having difficulties recruiting volunteers'

'Refugee Services is providing good support for volunteers, positive word-of-mouth helps engage more recruits'

'Returning volunteers – remain involved'

'Casework issues can be handled by Chandra'

'Volunteer Supervision by Heather'

'Xmas picnic acknowledging the volunteers contribution'

'Good community connections'

'Volunteers "give and they get"!''

'Nelson is a generous community, with high level of donations'

'Retired professionals, high awareness of issues and willing to help'

'Nelson is not transient so the volunteer pool tends to remain fairly constant'

'33% of volunteers are migrants – on one recent course it was up to 50% migrants'

'Volunteer Programme is now 47 hours, with 5 hours focused on housing. 3 years ago, course was only 20 hours.'

4. Agency perspective on services for refugees in Nelson

'Maintain the ability to be "non-competitive", supporting each other as services to "get it right" while working with government policy.'

'Personal commitment by individuals to work collaboratively'

'Agencies have clear idea of their roles – less overlap'

'Clarity of who's doing what.'

'Collectively being able to respond to opportunities'

'Looking Back Moving Forward meetings provide networking that is happening and helps services'

'Agencies can start to see the whole picture – dealing with people and families holistically.'

'Paid staff from the communities in place rather than volunteers being burnt out as volunteers.'

'Provision of supervision for staff.'

'Needs of refugees are being identified and programmes developed – e.g. IGNITE'

'Staff within organisations such as Family Start have a passion for working with refugees.'

'We are building up longitudinal knowledge.'

"We know how far they will go in this generation/workforce" – realistic profile of their capacity'

'A lot more consultation happening for / within refugee communities.'

'More connection nationally for services / agencies.'

'National conferences.'

'Opportunities seem to come around more regularly for upskilling'

'more info / training available on the web (webinars)'

'MoU for PHO, Victory Health, NMC, SI, Pacific Trust'

'Everyone has in mind a trusting relationship with funders – a personal connection with funders'

'Who provides \$\$\$ into Nelson??'

'Nurture relationships with funders – already quite a healthy relationship with funders, e.g. COGS'

5. Interpreter services (see also under Healthy Lifestyle section)

'Need translators at doctors, WINZ, etc'

'Language line interpreter only in Chin, they need Burmese interpreter, having a support worker attending appointments works better for them.'

'More frequent use of interpreters'

'We need interpreters who understand medical terms'

'24 hour on-call interpreter.'

b. What is working well?

'People can access help through friends, teachers and community'

'Technology is changing so fast e.g. SIRI on I Phone that provides translating service'

'Facilities like water supply, electricity and transport is good'

'Association with government is good'

'Housing is good'

'Nelson Tasman Housing Trust has provided one house for refugee family.'

'Children like to go to Victory - friends and community are there.'

'Habitat for Humanity has provided houses for former refugee families'

In summary the following things are helping former refugees to access services they need in Nelson:

- In general Nelson is considered to be a warm and welcoming place for newcomers
- Former refugees appreciate the basic community facilities and services that are available
- There is a high degree of cooperation and collaboration amongst local services
- Refugee Services Aotearoa NZ provides critical initial settlement support to refugee newcomers which is really appreciated by these individuals and families
- The co-location of several key services, including a 'shop-front' Multicultural Resource Centre in central Nelson promotes accessibility and has been very effective in ensuring that new arrivals receive quality information quickly
- There have been a number of local projects to help former refugees into their own homes including 'Habitat for Humanity'
- Victory Primary School and Community Centre provide friendly and targeted education and wrap around support to most of the former refugees who settle in Nelson.

c. What is not working well?

'Work and Income – often kept waiting and some staff have a very poor attitude and people feel demeaned.'

'Housing NZ procedures if housing is not adequate if children are sick cold house no sun children with asthma'

'Can Refugee Services work with us for more than six months?'

'They will be there if NMC Fieldworker is going for an appointment, but they don't want to just volunteer.'

'Government funding being erratic – affects all services, agencies. Difficult to forecast'.

'Some mismatch between funding and needs of refugees'

'If funding is withdrawn, services will stop unless volunteers step up'

'Stagnant (ACE) funding but significant increase in numbers'

'National government dropped ESOL funding for 2 years'

'Change of focus for Family Start – criteria changes could mean changes to provision of services/who is eligible for the service'

'Interpreters for refugee families so that they can express their needs - to Work and Income, Housing NZ, medical doctors, IRD, legal advice, issues around insurance obligations. Whose responsibility is it for interpreters to be made available?'

The quotes above from focus groups reflect some of the local opinion about what is not working so well in relation to accessing services. In summary, the following appear to be key issues:

- Difficulty understanding some of the regulations around different government

- services (especially when these change)
- Difficulty accessing interpreters to help access key services eg health services and support
- Accessing English language support
- Managing the transition from the first six months of intensive support provided by Refugee Services Aotearoa NZ to more general support in the wider community.

Further Action and Opportunities

A number of opportunities and suggestions for further action have been identified through the focus groups and consultation process. Some of these have been accorded priority status with agreed outcomes, success measures, actions and key partners identified. These will be combined with priority actions for other key findings areas and incorporated into an overarching action plan. Other suggestions have been noted for future attention.

a. Priority Actions

Priority Action:	Secure sustainable funding to ensure ongoing access to quality interpreting services for mainstream organisations in Nelson
Target Population:	Mainstream organisations and former refugee community
Available Data:	Listed numbers (and language range) of local interpreters (and changes over time) Usage rate of interpreters Quality of local interpreter pool (assessment and monitoring information)
Story behind the Data:	Former refugees in Nelson are not always accessing mainstream services and information due to language barriers and a limited pool of available interpreters in Nelson. Reluctance to invest in interpreting services on the part of some mainstream agencies and services. Difficulties securing sustainable funding to cover these costs – Ignite has filled this gap for the last 18 months (approx \$20,000 in 2011- 2012)
What We Want to Achieve (outcome)	A community where: • Former refugees have access to the interpreting services they need to access local services, information and support • Local agencies / services commonly use quality interpreting services to ensure all residents are able to receive information and communicate their needs
Measures of Success (indicators)	• Increased use of interpreters by hospital, GPs and other agencies • Increased numbers of former refugee people engaging with Nelson host communities and activities

Measures of Success (indicators) cont.	• Positive feedback about former refugees being able to access information and services
Partners	• Refugee Services Aotearoa NZ • Nelson Multicultural Council • English Language Partners • Nelson Bays Primary Health • Victory Community Centre • Victory Primary School • Other Government Agencies and Service Providers • Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology • Settling In
What Steps We're Taking (actions)	• Strong advocacy to ensure regular opportunities to train and up-skill local interpreters • Regularly updating and disseminating of local interpreter lists • Strategies to educate mainstream organisations about the need for interpreter services to ensure equitable access to information and services • Use interpreters to raise awareness of existing resources and services to former refugees • Secure ongoing funding for interpreters as is currently provided by Ignite funding
Performance Measures (evaluating our work)	• Feedback from users about interpreters – usefulness and quality • Availability of interpreters to meet demand • Payment level for local interpreters is adequate and comparable with other refugee settlement areas

b. Further Opportunities & Suggestions

- Ensure regular acknowledgement of volunteers e.g. petrol vouchers, coffee vouchers, movie tickets, ice-creams
- Increase Professional Development/IAC training for agencies and for Refugee Services staff
- Improve opportunities for former refugee youth to play sport and music e.g. Kayan guitar, drum, electric guitar
- Produce a monthly calendar of activities/ events to be distributed to refugee communities and agencies
- Develop a Pathway to Services document for former refugees so that they know who to go to for what. This is to be done between Refugee Services, Refugee Services Community Development Worker, Nelson Multicultural Council Coordinator and fieldworker, Be Well Nurse at Victory Health.

3.2 FAMILIES, CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND OLDER PEOPLE

Introduction

‘My family found going to the courses are good – our children are happy and listen to us. Some other people need help.’

‘We are very happy to be together as a big family.’

Many refugees arrive in their new country, having spent years apart from family members, either through forced or voluntary separation, death and imprisonment. Some arrive as family groups however it is not uncommon for family members to arrive separately or to be reunited at different times, sometimes after long periods of separation. Although reunification is largely a joyful outcome, unsurprisingly, difficulties can arise. Of course many individuals and families are not reunited with other family members and so they have to adjust, not only to a new country and culture but also to the lack of extended family support structures that so often characterise the cultures that they come from.

Many former refugee families have settled happily into life in Nelson. However it is clear that they face many challenges - raising children in a new land, supporting their elders and trying to navigate a path between

the expectations, culture and values of their homeland and the very different social context in New Zealand. Particular challenges arise in relation to parenting as children seek to fit in with their New Zealand peers and parents try to retain a sense of culture and tradition.

The issue of ‘arranged marriages’ was also raised within focus groups – the complexities involved and the problems that can arise following these arrangements.

Role of Refugee Services Aotearoa NZ

In an effort to help families with their transition to life in Nelson, Refugee Services Aotearoa NZ has introduced a Settlement Pathway which has milestones at six weeks, three months, six months, nine months and one year. Former refugees are surveyed at 15 months. These pathways are basically the progress markers but the social issues of the family are also picked up to report to the Social Worker. High functioning families are referred on from the Social Worker to the Case Worker, who works 30 hours per week and has 200 cases currently – volunteers do most of the work with families in the first six months after arrival.

Existing Services and Activities

Key services to support former refugee families in Nelson include:

- Family Start Newcomers parents group
- Nelson Multicultural Council Multicultural toddlers group
- IGNITE parenting in New Zealand Stage 1 & Stage 2 programs run by SKIP educator through Nelson Kindergarten association
- Refugee communities Chin & Zomi youth groups
- English Language Partners craft group
- Nelson Multicultural Council elderly newcomers group
- Nelson Bays Community Law- support with Immigration queries regarding family sponsorship
- Victory Homework Academy
- Victory Primary School YIKES programme
- The New Hub - Friday evening programme
- Adult ESOL playgroup

Feedback From Focus Groups⁷

a. Main themes

1. Parenting
2. Extended family/community
3. Between two cultures
4. Youth
5. Arranged marriages
6. Older people

1. Parenting

'More parenting courses are needed'

'For parenting courses, NMC Fieldworker used interpreters to get people there.'

'Our priorities are our family, look after our family.'

'Happy with children'

'Hard to keep our children obeying us'

'difficult to spend enough time with our children when parents are working two different shifts in the workplace'

'My wife and I are working so we need a family member to help and look after the children'

'Younger children don't obey their parents because there is a different parenting style in New Zealand society'

'College students need more guidance from their parents but their parents don't know enough about what is happening in their lives because of lack of English'

'I will stay with my small son and daughter until they are at school and then I will go back to work.'

'Problem because of different parenting style in New Zealand e.g. smacking not allowed'

'Some families need to have parenting courses.'

'We cannot afford to look after our children as well as we used to - cannot buy food because of expensive food'

'May be problems due to divorce – children not getting enough care'

'I go to Playgroup with my two small children'

2. Extended family / community

'We are very lucky as we have three generations in our house. We have grandfather, grandmother, two sons, 1 daughter, 1 daughter-in-law and four grandchildren'

'We miss our families back in our home country and other countries. This makes us depressed.'

'Many families living together in Nelson'

'It is difficult for youth because we are a small community and there are not enough people/ youth.'

'My brother is going to get engaged soon. My sister and brother-in-law and their daughter live in their own house. We are happy that all our family are here. We are much happier.'

'We need to increase our community member and we need more people to come to Nelson.'

'I am able to help look after the children and my nieces when their mother and father are at work.'

'...feeling homesick too.'

3. Between two cultures

'My children live in two cultures. It hard to mix cultures'

'There is too much freedom for their children in New Zealand.'

'New Zealanders are independent people and have human rights. Our children have too much freedom. How can we make them

⁷This feedback comprises direct quotes from focus group participants or notes as interpreted and presented by facilitators.

respect their parents?’

‘Refugees expect their older children to live at home until they get married. In New Zealand it’s the opposite case. There’s a conflict.’

‘Husbands don’t respect their wives e.g. their opinions. They don’t listen to what the wife wants.’

4. Issues for youth

‘Youth of our community are looking for quick integration. They are in a dilemma about what to do.’

‘We need some guidance from some organisation or government body to invite/ make them participate in games/sports’.

‘We are studying so unable to work so have to stay living with family – crowded – youth cannot be independent.’

‘Some college age students are struggling a lot – they are looking for opportunities to integrate through sports/games.’

‘Drink driving’

‘Teen pregnancies’

‘Trend towards DPB – girls not born here but are becoming young parents’

‘Love sport, Love soccer!!’

‘Refugee youth especially in the education system are not reaching potential.’

‘not just about education system’

‘teenage youth at risk’

‘services view vs cultural expectation of what is success’

‘what does success look like for refugee youth?’

‘Work with parents of teenage youth – support with the natural dynamic between

parents and youth’

‘Good English speaking ability of youth empowers them, but distorts the relationship with the parents who do not have the same ability. – This can cause friction for the parent/youth relationship.’

5. Arranged marriages

There are many examples of different types of arranged marriages.

Example 1:

“A couple in Myanmar, boy is 19 and girl is 17years. A marriage is arranged. Man will flee and declare his wife on arrival. When man is settled in Nelson, he starts work to get money to pay people to smuggle wife to Malaysia. Woman then states partner is in Nelson so is sent there and couple are reunited.”

Example 2:

“Arranged marriage can be organised long distance when man is here and says to parents in Malaysia to get him a wife. He sends money and helps family of prospective wife – this is seen as a good opportunity for wife. Not declared as wife. Wife goes to Kuala Lumpur and declares her husband and then comes to NZ. They have not met as adults, only as children. Wife is often forced to come over by her family.”

‘Two arranged marriages have led to extreme domestic violence.’

‘Men hold wives responsible – parents are exploiting daughters’

‘Arranged marriages do not fit with NZ culture – educated, modern women who have been in Nelson for some time are sent a husband from a peasant background who is uneducated and illiterate. This can mean the woman is forced to work in market gardening setting rather than use NZ qualifications

because her education is a challenge for her new husband. Domestic violence can result but if the women chooses to leave that marriage, the community will punish her by stopping her seeing her children and ostracise her from her community – cases are going to Family Court to resolve this.'

6. Older People

'I want to send some photos to my children's grandparents as my husband passed away last year. I want his family to know about their grandchildren It is important for them. I need some help to send photos to them.'

'Family Start staff bring families together'

'Harder for older people to learn new language'

'Difficult for older people to get a job'

'older parents holding on to "culture from home country" but things change there as well'

'Invalid Benefit – 57 – being moved on to Unemployment Benefit. Can't speak English and still homesick. Went to Workbridge. Cannot read and write. Referral to Community Law.'

'elderly members in the community aged 50 – 65 expected by Work and Income to look for work - they have no English language and don't have skill sets to enter the labour market'

'Plan and help the community on what they need - especially for the older generation. To help them get together and be a role model to new generation.'

'Reunion with my siblings who are in refugee camps – we approached UNHCR and expected them to say "yes"'

'Homesick'

b. What is working well?

- The wrap around support provided by the Victory Community Centre, Victory Heath and Victory Primary School has been pivotal in helping former refugee families to access the support that they need.
- The IGNITE project has supported a number of programmes that have been beneficial for former refugee families, including the targeted parenting support and reducing family violence programmes.

c. What is not working well?

- Some former refugee families are struggling to cope with issues around family violence and mental health – many of which are interwoven. Local services are aware of many of these issues but are not always adequately resourced to respond to the level of need and complexity involved.
- Issues with former refugee youth and intergenerational tensions are a cause of concern for many parents (and agencies) who need targeted support to cope.

Further Action and Opportunities

A number of opportunities and suggestions for further action have been identified through the focus groups and consultation process. Some of these have been accorded priority status with agreed outcomes, success measures, actions and key partners identified. These will be combined with priority actions for other key findings areas and incorporated into an overarching action plan. Other suggestions have been noted for future attention.

a. Priority Actions

Priority Action:	Work collaboratively to support happy families in stable communities with a focus on positive parenting
Target Population:	Refugee families with children
Available Data:	Enrolments of refugee children in Early Childhood Education Refugee parents accessing parenting programmes and support New families coming to Nelson through family reunification being positively supported by existing family network Refugee youth participating in sport and other activities
Story behind the Data:	Reported lower levels of engagement with support groups/agencies Lack of targeted information available to migrant mothers about local services Reports of loneliness and isolation Children not behaving well in school and social settings

What We Want to Achieve (outcome)	• Happy families in stable former refugee communities • Refugee mothers, fathers and grandparents are empowered to parent their children in a NZ context
Measures of Success (indicators)	• Number of mothers connected to each other and appropriate support groups • Refugee parents accessing parenting support • Positive family feedback • Refugee families already settled in Nelson provide sound and positive support for new members of their families arriving here
Partners	• Refugee Services • SKIP • Victory Primary School • LBMF forum • Plunket • Parenting Course providers • Settling In • NMC • Refugee Forum • Victory Community Centre • Y kids • Early Childhood educators • Primary schools

What Steps We're Taking (actions)	• Work with existing providers to develop a focus for former refugees • Ongoing collaboration within LBMF forum • Parenting in NZ courses delivered by Nelson Kindergarten Association/ SKIP educator. Funding from IGNITE • Close collaboration between Refugee Services and Victory Primary School and Victory Community Centre
Performance Measures (evaluating our work)	• Development of new /extended services that respond to refugee mums' needs • More refugee families accessing appropriate and affordable services – GP enrolments, pre-school enrolments, Plunket enrolments • Number of refugee women attending parenting / other support groups



3.3 APPRECIATION OF DIVERSITY

Introduction

‘We are happy but feel lonely as a small community’

‘We share our culture to local Nelson community’

‘Service providers need to have patience – work at truly understanding the cultures’

Nelson has a reputation as a welcoming multicultural destination for migrants and newcomers from New Zealand and around the globe. German settlers have been attracted to the area since the earliest period of European settlement and the sunshine and relaxed lifestyle continues to entice newcomers from a wide range of cultures and backgrounds. This willingness to embrace diversity makes Nelson an ideal place for former refugees to start a new life, and on the whole the community has responded very positively to the ever-changing population mix. Nelson hosts a number of regular events that celebrate local diversity including Race Relations Day celebrations, ethnic football tournaments and Rainbow Praise which brings different faiths together

to sing and worship in unity. Different community groups also celebrate their own special days and rituals throughout the year. The Nelson Multicultural Council supports many of these activities and events which are usually well promoted and attended by the wider Nelson community. Key issues raised by focus group participants and others in relation to former refugees living in Nelson include:

- the challenges involved in fitting in with a new community while retaining strong links with your first language and culture
- maintaining cohesion and unity within refugee community groups – divisions can occur because of personality differences or because of existing tensions between different ethnic groups or factions within a community
- difficulties upholding and maintaining religious practices (for one group in particular) due to a lack of suitable places of worship, spiritual leaders and congregation size
- a degree of racism and lack of understanding within some parts of the community.

Existing Services and Activities

Several services, activities and resources are currently available for former refugees and the wider community to help build greater understanding and appreciation of diversity within Nelson. Key services and events include:

Nelson Multicultural Council – organise and support a range of events and activities including:

- Race Unity Day
- Rainbow Praise
- Around the World in Tasty Ways cook book

- Nelson Newcomers Network

Range of ethnic celebrations and events including:

- Burmese community of Nelson commemoration of 8/08/88
- Zomi harvest festival
- Burmese new year celebrations
- Bhutanese-Nepali Dasain festival
- Kayanni New year celebration
- Chin National Day

Global Soccer festival

Kai Festival at Whakatu Marae

Feedback From Focus Groups⁸

a. Main themes

1. Refugee community - fitting in
2. Retaining culture
3. Host community
4. Religion
5. Celebrating diversity

1. Refugee community – fitting in

Positive attributes / strengths

‘Keeping in touch with our own ethnic communities’

‘Loving in community’

‘A variety of ethnicities in Nelson, each with bigger, stronger communities therefore more able to support themselves.’

‘Happy with help they get e.g. schools, accommodation.’

‘Unity in the community (we help/love each other)’

‘Plenty of interaction with people from ethnic communities’

‘Balance between “creative ideas” and solutions and dealing with the realistic limitations’

Challenges for former refugee communities

‘New year’s Party, get together, we have a chance to see each other. It is hard to get each others free time to have a catch up, not enough communication or networking with each other in the community. It is hard to get the whole community to get together during spare time.’

‘Timing of situations are very hard, everyone

is busy working, business...’

‘the Kayan community is still too small and we can’t get organized yet.’

‘All or nothing – group mentality.’

‘They don’t want to come to meetings. We want our community to be strong and for us to learn our language.’

‘NMC Fieldworker has to email and call before visits – often not there or have to go out.’

‘Training on appointments, keeping arrangements’

‘We meet together with the Community but some people don’t want to join with us.’

‘They might be good, not much disturbances except for few cases but not participate in local areas due to language barriers’

‘Social connections with the “wider community” for the former refugee families - therefore not practicing English speaking’

*‘Split in Zomi community with some going under Chin with a guy called *****. Initially they thought they needed their own society, even though they were encouraged not to do this. Now President of Chin (is Zomi) is trying to bring them together.’*

*‘***** gave historic reasons for different group – ***** and *****’s groups have split.. Both at RUD and Rainbow Praise... Bad blood... ***** involved - NMC offered mediation. RS does not like ***** – he’s a bully’*

‘At Interpreters’ training there was an issue where he could not participate. He turned up anyway,, he manipulates others...’

‘Frustration with Chin Association getting

⁸This feedback comprises direct quotes from focus group participants or notes as interpreted and presented by facilitators.

some sort of communication – emails, phone calls not answered. Long history of this. Burma Day when Whenua Iti Outdoors women's day was planned. **** now Chair of Chin”

‘Settlement distress” – sacrificing so many things’

Suggestions to help communities stay strong and get connected

‘Having regular meetings to find solutions to the problems’

‘Creating some activities e.g. cooking, weaving,’

‘Support each other’

‘Change all negative attitude/thoughts to positive (attitude in facing life)’

‘use the profits from our community events to start our own community.’

‘As newcomers, they would like to be invited to participate in games/programmes’

‘Unify in community’

‘Support each other or help each other’

‘fund to help our families in need’

‘Allow space where a “new culture” can evolve’

‘Learn from Pacific experience: that community existed before Former Refugee community’

‘Service providers need to have patience – work at truly understanding the cultures’

‘There are pivotal points of change e.g. Pacifica community setting up Ministry of Pacific Affairs’

‘Would like to see paradigm shift – change in attitude and culture’

‘Support the new generation to succeed and thrive’

‘There needs to be patience shown for the communities to look forward’

‘Not long enough help for settlement support – some volunteers are particularly helpful – keep support for longer.’

‘Need for Cross Cultural Workers to get training’

2. Retaining Culture

‘We feel proud of teaching our own language to our children and adult and it is important for keeping our culture.’

‘Our children attend Chin school and we are happy because it keeps our culture alive

Keeping culture’

‘Acknowledge our children, understanding our culture’

‘Keep our traditions by having annual event e.g. Kayenni National Day’

‘Children to learn our language’

‘I want my children to be able to learn our language. They can understand but can't speak the language so it is important for them to learn. I speak 3 languages but I cannot write in Khmer. I can only write in Vietnamese. We were not allowed to write in Khmer by the Vietnamese. The children and the adults need to learn to write in Khmer.’

3. Host community

‘we want to communicate with the wider Nelson community and tell them our stories but because of poor English, the people in the Nelson community can't understand us.’

‘We have very nice neighbours who visit us and I share some vegetable with the neighbours.’

‘Playing football with the wider Nelson community’

‘Can be problems and misunderstandings with neighbours’

'NZ pet owners don't pick up their cat and dog poo when their animals wander into our garden'

'Nelson Multicultural Council are inclusive'

'Our neighbours are very nice and are good'

'We talk to each other and they come to visit us'

'We have fantastic sponsors but we need to have them for longer than six months'

'We learn about Nelson and the shops, the doctors, going to class'

'It is good for us to learn from Kiwi people'

'Most people are friendly Most Kiwis don't pay attention enough when we are unable to make clear communication to them poor service'

'Support from greater community is really good – from NMC and Settling In – it is excellent'

'Need to learn to a certain level of English to talk with locals'

'Need to integrate with wider community'

'New Zealand clothing is too big for us'

4. Religion

'Some religious groups push their views on people who may be vulnerable to the detriment of people's cultural/religious integrity'

'religious divisions'

'losing our culture through baptism here'

'children will not have connection with their past through religion'

'no place for religious celebration and worship together'

'baptism to new religion leads them to a place to worship'

'main issue is moving away from own culture'

'Almost half of the community is affected by this issue and it is very divisive'

'Try to get people to understand they can stick with culture but have different religion – some Buddhist, 90% Hindu and they have different death rituals'

'Christians don't want former refugees to celebrate their traditional festivals'

'Many children reluctant to attend Nepali language classes probably because of lack of awareness that language and religion are two different elements'

'Not aware of anything like this anywhere else - it's not happening in Palmerston North and Christchurch'

'With Chin community, Burmese community and Impact Church community'

'Need a place of worship – Hindu temple'

'We have the monk come to Nelson for New Year from Auckland but he has only a few months to be in New Zealand. We would like a monk in Nelson. It is hard to get halls.'

5. Celebrating diversity

'Holding cultural events, celebrating festivals together and inviting the wider Nelson community'

'Performing at Race Unity Day, Kua do Pawi Festival, National Day and Rainbow Praise'

'Community Language/Cultural Classes once a week'

Publicly acknowledging and celebrating the personal achievements and contributions that people from a refugee background make to our community is very important. One of the ideas to help with this was to produce a book/publication that will profile individuals and groups from the different refugee communities in Nelson who are doing well in areas such as school, sports, culture groups, work or business.

If you could change three things, what would you do?

- 'Improve our community'
- 'Spread our culture'
- 'Cooperate with community'

New Beginnings: Refugees Stories – Nelson (a local publication)

New Beginnings: Refugees Stories – Nelson was launched in the Elma Turner Library on World Refugee Day 20 June 2012. The book was the vision of former refugee Sue Leya and was supported by the Nelson Multicultural Council, Refugee Services Nelson and Settling In.

This project has four main goals:

1. To acknowledge the success and or contribution refugee background people are making to the Nelson community.
2. To produce a publication in which young people from refugee background aspire to be included in future years
3. To inform the wider Nelson community of the history of refugee settlement in New Zealand and within the Nelson region.
4. To provide a resource that demonstrates all the positive input of former refugees into our community and our region

The publication is a snapshot of some of the successful refugee backgrounds people living in the Nelson region. It is available on the Nelson Multicultural Council website www.nelsonmulticultural.co.nz.

b. What is working well?

- For a small community, Nelson hosts a large number of multicultural events and celebrations and diversity is evident in many ways
- In recent times a number of different groups have joined together to celebrate/commemorate their festivals
- Rainbow Praise has been a significant local event that promotes unity through diversity – bringing many different people together to celebrate their different faiths through song.
- Some local sports clubs have been flexible and inclusive of former refugees and other newcomers - eg soccer players can pay a weekly sub rather than a sessional lump sum which enables seasonal workers and people working at sea to only pay when they play.

c. What is not working well?

- It has been suggested that some parts of the Nelson host community are not as welcoming as they could be and do not actively participate in any multicultural events in the city.
- Conversely, some former refugee residents do not participate in the wide range of mainstream events and other festivities that are frequently held in Nelson.
- There is not widespread community awareness of the background of many former refugee residents of Nelson and the civic responsibilities for host communities in relation to welcoming and including these newcomers.

Further Action and Opportunities

A number of opportunities and suggestions for further action have been identified through the focus groups and consultation process. Some of these have been accorded priority status with agreed outcomes, success measures,

actions and key partners identified. These will be combined with priority actions for other key findings areas and incorporated into an overarching action plan. Other suggestions have been noted for future attention.

a. Priority Actions

Priority Action:	Develop strategies to increase the number of former refugee people engaging with the Nelson host community and local activities
Target Population:	Everybody – host community and the former refugee community
Available Data:	Very limited quantitative data
Story behind the Data:	There are many festivals, celebrations, sports activities around Nelson but refugees are often not participants in these. It would be good to see refugees enjoying and participating more with the wider Nelson community just as it would be good to have many more locals participating in celebrations hosted by the refugee community. A lack of awareness in some parts of the community about the civic responsibilities associated with refugee resettlement. This is even more important now that Christchurch is no longer able to host new refugee families following the earthquakes.

What We Want to Achieve (outcome)	• Former refugees feel welcome and a valued part of the Nelson community • The host community embraces former refugees and enjoys and celebrates the differences that they bring • Increased awareness by Nelson City Council and residents that Nelson City is one of only six settlement areas for refugees in New Zealand and acknowledgement that we have responsibilities as hosts.
Measures of Success (indicators)	• Presence of refugees at community events • Positive media stories celebrating the refugee community • Former refugees engaged in local activities alongside host community • Former refugee community organisations receiving funding from NCC community grants and contracts

Partners	• Refugee community • Victory Community Centre • Nelson Newcomers Network • Nelson City Council • Refugee Services Aotearoa NZ • Nelson Multicultural Council • Ethnic Soccer Festival Organisers
What Steps We're Taking (actions)	• Increase promotion of existing activities throughout the region • Encourage more refugees to attend social networking opportunities such as Newcomers Network • Collate an extensive list of existing activities, including those offered by churches, community centres, ethnic communities and others • Build on calendar of events that celebrate diversity, especially for refugee community • Build up expertise and relationships with media • Work with refugee communities to share information and stories with wider community • Build on Intercultural Training opportunities / strategies to improve intercultural awareness in wider community • Tailored resources to schools / service providers and others with key information about refugee groups
Performance Measures (evaluating our work)	• Increased attendance of host community at refugee events • Increased numbers of multicultural events involving refugees • Greater proportion of positive media stories about refugees • Increased visibility of refugees in wider community – e.g holding key positions • Increased number of former refugee groups receiving funding from NCC

3.4 HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Introduction

“Thank you for all the health care at the hospital. It helped my sick baby”

“Free water, cheap rent, beautiful, wild space”

“I remember the bad things that happened to me and don’t sleep well.”

Nelson has much to offer former refugees in terms of a healthy lifestyle – accessible beaches and countryside, great local produce, a sunny climate and a relaxed pace of life. On the whole former refugees living here are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to bring up their families in this part of the world and they appreciate the health services that they can access in New Zealand. It is a fact, however, that the former lives and experiences that brought these newcomers to New Zealand are likely to have a big impact on their mental and physical health for a significant period of time. Refugee Services has provided comment on this issue:

Report from Refugee Services Aotearoa NZ - Nelson

Both the Kayan and the Bhutanese-Nepali people have been living in refugee camps in Thailand and Nepal for the last 18–20 years and as a result of their dislocation and living conditions many have high and complex needs. All will have experienced trauma and approximately 30% will have experienced torture or witnessed torture and / or rape of immediate family members.

During their six weeks at the Refugee Resettlement Centre in Mangere, where early signs indicating the need for extra support may be exhibited, some of the refugees may undergo psychiatric and psychological assessments. Referrals for

ongoing support are usually necessary and are made directly to the existing mental health providers. Historically, the mental health services in Nelson have had very limited exposure and experience in working with refugees, with no specific acknowledgement having been made within the health services to address the unique needs of survivors of torture and trauma.

It is well documented, however, that many refugees do not present for assistance with extreme trauma-related issues until a few years after their arrival. This is often because it is only then that they are settled enough to address these problems, or a re-traumatisation has triggered the need for such a referral.

The Nelson office of Refugee Services Aotearoa NZ is responsible for the resettlement of quota refugees when they arrive in Nelson. The Social Worker has noted an increasing workload of cases needing mental health service particularly from former refugees who have been in New Zealand for over two years.

In recent years Wellington Refugees as Survivors (RAS) Trust has seen that their new clients, over one year, represent approximately 30% of the region’s intake of new refugees. As the refugees arriving in Nelson have come to New Zealand under the same system as those in the Wellington region it is fair to assume a similar demand exists. This means that the Nelson intake of 60-70 people, (8-10% of the national quota) plus some cases of Family Reunion, would equate to a potential demand of approximately 20 refugees requiring a specialised mental health service in the first year of resettlement.

Existing mental health services in Nelson do not provide a specific, specialist service for former refugees but through consistent advocacy over the past three years, from Refugee Services and the agencies involved in the re-settlement sector, progress has been made to better address the needs of new and older former refugees. Particular individuals within the mental health services have responded to the professional, ground-breaking, unique challenge that refugees offer and have encouraged the wider health service sector to broaden their philosophy and responses to this vulnerable group. Much greater confidence now exists within Nelson health services to respond to the needs of refugees. Recent mental health case histories have had positive outcomes, with clients receiving sensitive, appropriate, holistic support.

Further challenges for these groups arise in relation to:

- a lack of local interpreters to help communicate medical information between former refugees and health professionals
- issues around the misuse of alcohol which some service providers believe is a form of self-medication for lonely and traumatized individuals
- New Zealand youth culture and the high level of drinking, drugs and teenage sex which is anathema to some cultures
- the costs associated with healthcare – and the need for low income families to prioritise their spending
- poor oral health for many former refugees as a result of prior living conditions and lack of knowledge about the negative impact of some foods and drinks.

Existing Services and Activities

Key services available in Nelson to support a healthy lifestyle include:

Nelson Marlborough District Health Board

- Nelson Hospital – offers a range of medical, surgical and health services
- Mental Health services – recently there has been an increased focus on mental health issues for former refugees resulting in closer work relationships with other services and provision of a range of education workshops to promote better understanding of issues and responses.

- Antenatal care
- Oral health care and health promotion
- Alcohol and Drug Services

Victory Community Health

- Be Well Nurse
- New Health clinic at Victory - free, weekly, after-hours nursing clinic at Victory Community Health Centre 5.30 – 8pm to assist those in the community who sometimes struggle to get the health care they need. Provides general health checks, minor illness and injury assessment, blood pressure,

health information and assistance to access other services. No appointments necessary. All family members, including children, very welcome.

Dental Services

School dental clinics were closed late in 2011 and families are now sent appointment cards and expected to take their children to appointments at the new oral health clinic on the Franklyn/Tipahi Street corner. Parents continue to be assisted to enrol two year olds, new arrivals and given information regarding access to free dental services for secondary school students.

Sports and Recreation Opportunities

- Football – Former refugee young men and children are frequently enthusiastic

soccer players and some have become local representative players. There are three Chin soccer teams who strive to excel in the annual Global Soccer Festival tournament as well as the national Chin games.

- Music is very important to many former refugees who have their own popular music bands, traditional music bands and Church choirs.
- Nelson Seido Karate has provided training free of charge, through NMC, to 13 former refugee children.

Targeted Resources

Healthy Living in New Zealand: Nutrition & Oral Health DVD – developed for Chin community.

Feedback From Focus Groups⁹

a. Main themes

1. Access to health services
2. Communications and interpreting services
3. Quality of life
4. Oral health
5. Mental health
6. Women's health
7. Issues for youth
8. General concerns

1. Access to health services

Cost

'Different fees charged by GP for different families'

'Expensive for going to GP. One doctor is cheaper than other. It can be difficult to pay.'

'Some of the GPs are too expensive to pay'

'Health care services – the treatment is not covered'

'Doctor will not give medication without appointment – very expensive'

'We are very lucky to have free health care at hospital'

⁹This feedback comprises direct quotes from focus group participants or notes as interpreted and presented by facilitators.

'Some GPs too expensive'

2. Communications and interpreting services

'Difficulties in language to express to doctors'

'DR's Bills - who should provide an interpreter for refugee families when they want help with health issues?'

'Need the help of interpreters'

'Most of the Bhutanese people can't follow up the doctor's advice as they can't speak directly to the doctors e.g. one family is supposed to get a hearing aid within six months but hasn't got one over one year later'

'We can't pay for interpreters'

'Tired of asking for interpreters – So will not go to doctor – too much trouble'

'Cannot communicate with doctor – If the money is here, why not have translators - Auckland, Christchurch have translators'

'The doctors at the hospital are helpful when we are sick and we have interpreters to help us'

'Health problems – may not understand doctor or be able to describe symptoms'

'Health – happy, nice interpreters'

'Need an interpreter at the doctor'

3. Quality of life

'I have made a green house and I work in the Garden all day and keep the property nice.' (Grandad)

'We are still not sure about what is healthy food and unhealthy food when we are in the supermarket e.g. we can't understand labels'

'Start doing some exercise instead of just staying at home'

'To live in good health'

4. Oral health

"We have noticed that refugees settling into the area are experiencing higher decay rates than average and that they have high needs in the area of oral health. Many young refugee children end up under General Anaesthetic in theatre having many decayed and abscessed teeth removed."

– comment from the Principal Dental Officer (NMDHB)

Oral health is a really big issue for former refugees. Most have lived on limited diets for long periods of time without access to dental education or care. Upon arrival many are seduced by the array of sugary drinks and foods available, however they lack any knowledge about the negative effects on teeth and oral health. Children are very vulnerable to poor oral health and suffer unnecessary pain and intervention as a result. Addressing this issue has been a priority for many local services and in 2010 the Nelson Settling In Health Sector group¹⁰ worked with the Nelson Chin community to develop a DVD¹¹ for their members. This resource has been very effective and has been used widely in Nelson and beyond with a range of groups.

'Refugee Services introduces the idea of fruit or fruit! Do not offer any other option!'

¹⁰The Nelson Settling In Health Sector Group is made up of representatives from Settling In, Nelson Multicultural Council, Refugee Services Aotearoa, Plunket, Nelson PHO, Nelson Marlborough District Health Board, Pregnancy Help and the Victory Community Health Centre.

¹¹Healthy Living in New Zealand: Nutrition & Oral Health

'Oral health care and healthy diet is not taught in Myanmar'

'Free dental treatment is good'

'Adult dental treatment is very expensive'

'Oral health is an issue'

'Oral health, especially coming from refugee camps in Thailand. They have had lots of fizzy drinks and sweets.'

'Dentists are very expensive'

5. Mental health

'Recent suicide in Nelson highlighted that the person involved sought help but no one picked up the signs.'

'I remember the bad things that happened to me and don't sleep well.'

'Mental health with Zomi man missing...'

'I came down from Wellington to Nelson with my son. I had a bomb thrown at my head when I was in my country. I have not been well since then.'

6. Women's health

'Last 5 years has seen huge amount of child bearing women arrive. At least five women are pregnant at any given time.'

'Midwives and Family Start offer excellent support'

'Possibility that new criteria for Family Start will eliminate some refugee women from this programme'

'Healthy babies, happy preschoolers'

'Family planning is always the woman's responsibility. I have unpleasant side effects from taking the hormone injection.'

'we prefer female doctors for female health problems'

'Lots of babies – some teenage pregnancies'

'Victory Community Health have doctors, midwives'

'Refugee Services social worker deals with pregnant women when they arrive'

'Some are lucky to have Family Start'

6. Issues for youth

'New Zealand youth drink too much. This is a bad example for our children.'

'Our youth drink too much alcohol'

12. General concerns

'Education in schools - health, sexuality - is it appropriate for the schools, for the families?'

'Been to Nelson hospital – they are not able to diagnose the basic problem but pain continues'

'Health – not getting treatment'

'Bhutanese coming in to Nelson now have higher health needs'

'chewing tobacco'

'Panadol is given a lot but doesn't work for all illnesses'

'Interaction between old and young is a challenge'

'I know I am sick but the Doctor says I need to go to work. I have more days feeling sick than felling well. They don't listen to me. My benefit gets cut so my son helps with the money and some money is sent from Vietnam. My son is a good boy now.'

'I worry about my mother because she has High blood pressure and diabetes. I have told her that she must eat carefully. I tell her that she will get too sick like some other people.'

'BIG ISSUE: Government needs to help more, take responsibility. Let into country but not'

provided for!'

b. What is working well?

- On the whole former refugees are very grateful for the health services that they can access in Nelson, as suggested by the following quotes from focus groups.

'The doctors in their surgery are nice and help us'

'We can see the nurse at Victory'

'We can go to the Emergency Dept at hospital if our children are sick at night'

'Health – good to get good service'

'I am sick and do not work. My vision is not good and my stomach is not good. I get picked up by Red Cross and get taken to check my blood every week'.

'Free hospital services and facilities good'

'Doctor did not check clearly in the past but now my new doctor looks after me well'

'Hospitality from medical team is really good'

'Health system is good'

'Health – free hospital and interpreters'

'We have the same Doctor from when we came to Nelson.'

'DVD produced for Chin community is a good resource (it has been requested by Palmerston North)'

- Recently the Nelson Marlborough District Health Board has increased its focus on former refugee clients and made improvements to ensure more holistic support for those former refugees with high and complex mental health needs.

c. What is not working well?

- Sometimes former refugees struggle to understand how our health system works

– they cannot always understand written or spoken information and they are not used to different types of support eg GPs and emergency services.

- There has been a longstanding lack of interpreters to help those with limited English to communicate with health professionals and access services. There has been some progress in this area recently as a result of the IGNITE funding but it remains a gap.
- The difference in costs between doctors and services is confusing for some former refugees.
- There is a lack of targeted resources available in Nelson to adequately respond to some of the high and complex health issues arising within the wider former refugee community. However, during the time this report was being compiled, combined with other awareness raising activities, more attention has been drawn to this matter and there is goodwill to work through solutions.

Further Action and Opportunities

A number of opportunities and suggestions for further action have been identified through the focus groups and consultation process. Some of these have been accorded priority status with agreed outcomes, success measures, actions and key partners identified. These will be combined with priority actions for other key findings areas and incorporated into an overarching action plan. Other suggestions have been noted for future attention.

a. Priority Actions

Priority Action:	Work with local health and education providers to ensure more support for refugee youth around mental health issues, including health education at schools
Target Population:	Total refugee population – including parents and youth Local education and health providers
Available Data:	Access of primary health services by former refugee groups Funding levels to support former refugee groups
Story behind the Data:	Lack of information about services available Increasing refugee youth population in Nelson Lack of knowledge within local agencies about how best to work with refugee youth and their families Parents often not equipped to support youth facing the challenges of growing up in NZ

What We Want to Achieve (outcome)	- Refugee youth is better informed about mental health and sexual health growing up in Nelson - Improved access to culturally appropriate health services and support
Measures of Success (indicators)	- Health indicators: pregnancy, alcohol and drug issues, mental health - Access to health services data - PHO enrolment data - ACC data - Number of trained interpreters - Oral health data
Partners	- Refugee Services - Nelson Multicultural Council <i>Looking Back Moving Forward</i> forum - Local High Schools - Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology - Mental Health Services - Nelson Bays Primary Health - NMDHB - General practice - NGO providers - Ministry of Health - Sport Tasman - Settling In

What Steps We're Taking (actions)	• Develop an information pack of services for refugee youth • Strengthen relationships with local high schools • Provide information to local schools to support prompt referrals and appropriate support • Work with local sports organisations to encourage greater participation by former refugee youth • Strategies to provide greater range of positive opportunities for youth in Nelson • Strategies to foster holistic health support for former refugee youth in Nelson
Performance Measures (evaluating our work)	• Targeted information for refugee youth and their parents around sexual health and alcohol and drug issues • Increased youth participation in sport and other local activities • Increased level of targeted support and prompt referrals for former refugee youth exhibiting mental health symptoms • Decreased referrals of former refugee youth to Mental Health services (over time)



3.5 SAFETY AND SECURITY

Introduction

‘When I was at Countdown, I had eggs thrown at my car by teenage boys in the car. I was scared but three people came to help me.’

‘Young neighbours are too noisy, are drinking alcohol, violent, make bad aggressive gestures at us.’

‘Police advise that most former refugee offending with driving, domestic violence happens under the influence of alcohol.’

Feeling safe and secure is not something that former refugees take for granted. Many have experienced years of insecurity in relation to their personal safety and that of their family and may be reluctant to trust anyone they do not know well. Incarceration, torture, rape and civil warfare are just some of the experiences that refugee arrivals may have endured – some for long periods of time. Many have a very real fear of officials of any kind and so interactions with the police and government agencies become challenging. Significant adjustment and support may be required.

Many of the former refugees in focus groups talked about the peace and easy living in Nelson and how most of the time they do feel safe. Others mentioned abusive comments on the streets occasionally and also from neighbours. Nelson is fortunate to have “Speak Out Nelson Tasman” (SONT) – a project started in 2010 to provide a safe and easy way for racist incidents to be reported. The project has been successful, with increasing use of the system and several successful prosecutions as a result. However, it seems that many locals are still unaware of SONT and there is still more work to be done to ensure former refugees are informed about this local resource.

A number of former refugees find the different laws and social mores in New Zealand difficult to adjust to and may struggle at times. Service providers in Nelson note that alcohol abuse and drink driving are problems for some and that common reasons for drink driving amongst this group are:

- Experimentation
- Manifestation of wealth (to have a car and afford alcohol)
- Symptom of trauma

The Ethnic Liaison officer (NZ Police) in Nelson reports that 90 % of his work relates to drink driving and family violence while local Mental Health Services report that their work with high and complex needs clients is primarily around family violence and alcohol abuse. Former refugees are now quite frequently being referred to Alcohol and Drug courses by social service providers. They note that sometimes they have to repeat courses until the message gets through, especially as interpreting support is often not available. Clients may willingly attend but not necessarily understand and therefore they are unlikely to make progress or adjust their behaviour. Constant advocacy for interpreting support is necessary; however this is challenging due to a general lack of funding to support interpreting and an unwillingness on the part of some of the agencies involved. It has been observed that the court system is handing out heavier sentences than a couple of years ago due to the recidivist nature of drink driving.

Existing Services and Activities

A range of services are available to respond to the safety and security concerns of migrants within Nelson. Key services include:

NZ Police – The Ethnic Liaison Officer:

- Provides a bridge and enhances relationships between New Zealand Police and Ethnic Communities.
- Identifies current / strategic issues affecting both Police and Ethnic Communities.
- Delivers the Ethnic Responsiveness Strategy.
- Promotes a multicultural style Police organisation to meet the safety needs of Ethnic Communities.
- Adopts innovative and culturally appropriate responses to problem solving including use of community based solutions.
- Assists in the development of any MoU, relationship agreements or other formal documentations that secures and sustains a positive relationship between Police and local ethnic communities.

Nelson Bays Community Law - Education regarding NZ Law, rights and responsibilities, with interpreter support via the IGNITE project.

Speak Out Nelson Tasman (SONT) – An initiative to address the issues of racism in the community along with a reporting system for racist incidents in Nelson / Tasman

Stopping Violence Courses - Under the IGNITE project, one former refugee

was able to attend a Stopping Violence course which had been agreed to under a Restorative Justice process. Translation of written material was provided and an interpreter was present at the sessions.

Drug and Alcohol Services

Kid Power Teen Power Full Power trust - a global non-profit leader in bullying prevention, child abuse prevention, violence prevention, stranger awareness, and personal safety education for children, teens, and adults, including those with special needs. Instead of using fear to teach about danger, Kid Power makes it fun to learn to be safe.

Safety Seminars - 47 former refugees attended a Kid Power Teen Power Full Power trust and Speak Out Nelson Tasman educational session on keeping safe. Interpreting support was provided under the IGNITE project. A follow-up training workshop was given to FR from the Kid Power Teen Power Full Power.

NZ Fire Service – safety information and seminars

Presentations to LBMF forum members, including:

- Domestic Violence: A Beginner's Guide to Police Attendance - Presented by David Cogger, Ethnic Liaison Officer (NZ Police)
- Engaging Men in the Programme - an interactive presentation by Felicity Hurst from Stopping Violence with co-facilitator, Chanda Dahal

Targeted resources:

- Water Safety

- Fishing Laws - In 2010, the local branch of the Ministry of Fisheries responded to a request by NMC to produce an easy to follow guide on Fishing Rules for Nelson. These are pictographic and easy to understand but have also been

translated into seven languages, including Khmer, Burmese, Thai and Vietnamese
<http://www.nelsonmulticultural.co.nz/INFORMATION/Nelson+General+Fishing+Rules.html>

Feedback From Focus Groups¹²

a. Main themes

- 1 Feeling safe in New Zealand
- 2 Discrimination
- 3 Drink driving
- 4 Family violence
- 5 International students
- 6 New Zealand Laws

1. Feeling safe in New Zealand

'All felt safe, free, and happy to be in New Zealand,'

'Worries about the future'

'Being able to help ourselves – be more independent'

'Nelson is safe and peaceful'

'Need to understand about law in NZ'

'Safe, happy and content'

'I am afraid of dogs'

2. Discrimination

'Don't like to complain if neighbours causing problem – e.g. noise'

'Bad neighbours'

'Some people make abusive gestures – e.g. raised middle finger or thumbs down'

'Feel sometimes there is racial discrimination'

'Racism – we need to be introduced to agencies for report when things happen'

'If my language was good, I could have gone to the respective agencies for reporting racism'

'People feel safe and like the quality of life'

'Teenage boys have yelled out of cars and told us to "go home"'

'My children were abused by Maori children using bad language and they are very frightened. I have not spoken to the school because the children think they will get bullied more if they tell the teacher. They are at Victory – I don't want my children to be frightened.'

'I went to a second hand shop and we bought some clothes but our PIN number was put on our receipt. How did the lady know? We went straight to the bank to change the PIN number.'

'Neighbours are swearing and rude. Disturbing and abusive – not sure what to do about it?'

'Rubbish, etc is thrown into our house – we are scared to call the police'

'Neighbours are drinking'

'Some complain about noise from neighbours – they are advised to ring 546 0200'

¹²This feedback comprises direct quotes from focus group participants or notes as interpreted and presented by facilitators.

'No reported racist incidents (by former refugees) yet in 2012'

'There were 3 successful prosecutions in 2011'

'Victim impact reports and contact with Community Leaders works well – an incident dealt with by “your average cop” will not get the same cooperation'

'If we are housed in a row of flats sometimes neighbours get annoyed at our large families and harass us'

3. Drink driving

'When Ethnic Liaison Officer took up his position in 2009 there was 3.6 incidents per month involving drink driving. Now there is one incident every 3 months with

12 - 15 serious offenders in former refugee community currently.'

'Drink/driving for young and middle aged Burmese. Sons of fathers following on with general disrespect for law. Drinking often starts in Malaysia – living illegally in Malaysia (Chin/Burmese) or drinking in Thailand. Sometimes driving with no Drivers License.'

'Law is not taken seriously, even with efforts by Community Police'

'There have been about 50 convictions for drink/driving and loss of licenses

Sometimes people offend 2nd and 3rd time. This effects employment,

Citizenship and ability to work as an interpreter (police checks).'

'There is a drink driving case causing injury about to come before the courts.'

4. Family violence

'There is a much better understanding of domestic violence'

'Gender based domestic violence increasing in

both communities'

'More separations (90% round violence)'

'Parenting orders/custody disputes'

'Most bad cases have separated and situations are resolved'

'Definitely not increasing'

'Full legal aid available to deal with these situations'

5. International Students

Although they are not former refugees, the perceptions of local international students gathered from a survey at Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT) helps to build up the picture of some of the concerns faced by newcomers from diverse backgrounds.

When surveyed in 2009, international students at NMIT reported that three of their top concerns were:

- Racial attack
- Street violence
- Property attack

Following on from the appointment of a Police Ethnic Liaison Officer that year seminars began at NMIT in 2010 with the NZ Police, Community Law and Public Health. A survey held in 2011 shows that issues related to racism no longer feature in “Top 10”. Students at that time were more concerned with finding ingredients for ethnic food recipes! Their view of themselves as victims had gradually changed to that of feeling that they make a positive contribution within a strong community.

6. New Zealand Laws

'Need to know about fishing regulations'

'No one has Arms Licence'

'Former refugees killing beasts in their garage

not appreciated by neighbours'

'Not able to understand New Zealand legal system'

'Women were chewing tobacco though they don't drink. Since Customs crackdown, things are much better. Refugee Services has good relationship with local Customs'

b. What is working well?

- The presence of the New Zealand Police Ethnic Liaison Officer ensures that many arising problems for the former refugee community are dealt with swiftly, and with a high degree of local and community knowledge. The Ethnic Liaison Officer has also helped to engender better relations between the Police and former refugee communities in Nelson.
- The size of the Nelson community and the high level of collaboration between different agencies mean that issues around safety are identified quickly and support structures put in place where possible. There is a supportive local network to monitor situations arising in relation to safety concerns such as family violence and problems with alcohol.
- The Speak Out Nelson Tasman (SONT) system for reporting racist incidents has been an effective local tool for empowering former refugees and educating the wider community with the message that racist behaviour is not okay and will not be tolerated.

c. What is not working well?

- There is a small percentage of former refugee men with significant problems who are repeat offenders and cause a disproportionate “disturbance” to their own community and potentially to the wider Nelson community.

Further Action and Opportunities

A number of opportunities and suggestions for further action have been identified through the focus groups and consultation process. Some of these have been accorded priority status with agreed outcomes, success measures, actions and key partners identified. These will be combined with priority actions for other key findings areas and incorporated into an overarching action plan. Other suggestions have been noted for future attention.



a. Priority Actions

Priority Action:	Improve feelings of safety for the former refugee population of Nelson
Target Population:	All former refugees in Nelson
Available Data:	Speak Out Nelson Tasman (SONT) data NZ Police data Family violence data – police and providers ACC data
Story behind the Data:	Some former refugees report that they experience verbal abuse on the street and there are instances of bullying of refugee children in schools. Violence in the home such as domestic violence and alcohol abuse are documented problems in the former refugee community.

What We Want to Achieve (outcome)	Former refugee community feels safe and connected in their neighbourhood and in the wider region: • Safe with police and legal system • Safe walking down the street • Safe in their home • Safe at school and at work Former refugee communities receive support to address unsafe behaviours in the home especially in relation to alcohol abuse and family violence
Measures of Success (indicators)	Monitoring and evaluation data re: • results of Speak Out Nelson Tasman • local New Zealand Police data • local family violence data • ACC data
Partners	• Refugee Services • Nelson Multicultural Council • Police Ethnic Liaison Officer • Speak Out Nelson Tasman Coordinator • Nelson City Council • Tasman District Council • Victory Community Centre • Nelson Bays Community Law Centre • Settling In

What Steps We're Taking (actions)	• Building capacity of local agencies to recognise and make appropriate referrals when family violence or other safety issues are identified • Support Police Ethnic Liaison to educate and upskill Nelson community and agencies to respond appropriately to safety and security needs • Develop good relationships with local schools to ensure local children understand their new refugee classmates. • Support driving initiatives for refugees • Promote and improve access to qualified interpreters for refugees dealing with legal and security matters
Performance Measures (evaluating our work)	Reducing rates / levels of: - Family violence incidents for former refugees in Nelson - driving offences for former refugees in Nelson - reports of racism by former refugees in Nelson Increased used of Speak Out Nelson Tasman reporting system by former refugees

b. Further Opportunities and Suggestions

- Improve the education around use of alcohol, including targeted resources for former refugee groups
- Develop strategies to inform former refugee women about their rights where there is domestic violence and how to access local support services
- Support the provision of First Aid courses around safety in the home, especially for women (Red Cross)
- Increase the focus on promoting the Speak Out Nelson Tasman reporting system.



3.6 KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Introduction

‘I was not given a seat in English language course – needed support to enrol in the school’

“They all said, English lessons, most of them, because they have been in NZ longer, they are not anymore accepted in the Victory ESOL class, 8 out of 10 mums wants a home tutor, especially those who have babies and young children. It is also hard for them to attend classes because of no transport

“May be in “lost” stage – children at school need extra support e.g. ESOL classes, homework programmes, bi-lingual teacher”

“We want them to mingle more with the Kiwi girls so they can learn more English. Too much talking Chin at school!”

The ‘New Land New Life’¹³ report notes that many refugees arriving in New Zealand have not had any opportunities to gain formal education prior to arrival – either in their country of origin or while living in refugee camps. Not surprisingly then, they are more likely than the New Zealand population as a whole to have no formal education and less likely to have post-school qualifications. A number of former refugees are not literate in their own language. These factors impact on their settlement in a number of ways - inhibiting employment prospects for adults and creating challenges around schooling for children who may be significantly behind their peers in terms of education. There is considerable support for refugee children at schools in Nelson including Refugee Education Coordinators (Ministry of Education) who help to identify particular needs and provide additional support. This includes NCEA exam support for those at secondary school

and intensive literacy and numeracy courses. Victory Primary School is an example of success in terms of the provision of education and wrap-around support to children (and their families) from high needs backgrounds.

Victory Primary School – a model of success!

The Victory Community Centre and Victory Health Centre are located on the grounds of Victory Primary School. The co-location of all these services provides wrap-around support for the whole family and is especially responsive to the very ethnically diverse school roll. Visitors to the school can see refugee mothers going to their English classes with young children who are cared for at the childcare facility (also on school grounds). Plunket, a ‘Be Well Nurse’, Work and Income, Community Gardens and a host of other services and activities are available on site for children, youth and older people. Victory is the “school of choice” for most of the former refugee families in Nelson and the children are achieving good results in their learning. Victory is widely acknowledged as exemplary in its delivery of education, and so much more, within a low decile area of New Zealand.

Victory Primary School currently receives funding from Settling In to assist with transport, for example to deliver former refugee children to and from after school Homework programmes held at Victory Primary, and to ensure the safe passage to and from school of some ‘at-risk’ children.

¹³Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment (Labour Group)

English proficiency is another significant area of concern for former refugees as it is a key marker of successful integration. Being able to speak the language of the host country is critical for newcomers to get work and to participate in education and training, and of course it enables them to meet people more easily, socialise and feel that they belong. Children tend to pick up language very quickly as do those who are interacting with their new community on a regular basis. However, for those who may be more isolated, including older people and women at home, learning and practicing English is more difficult. Cost, transport, childcare and availability and location of services can all be barriers to language acquisition. The 'New Land New Life' report does note, however, that former refugees significantly improved their ability to speak English after 10 years living in New Zealand – only 9% spoke English well or very well on arrival, while after 10 years or more living here, over two-thirds spoke English well or very well. The need for interpreters also reduced over time but not nearly as significantly and the proportion of those needing an interpreter or someone to help increased with age. The report notes that former refugees from Vietnam were significantly more likely to need help with interpreting than those from other countries. The availability and provision of quality interpreting services has been an ongoing challenge for the Nelson community, however recent funding from the IGNITE project has helped to boost the local pool and quality of available interpreters. There has been reluctance from some mainstream agencies to invest in interpretation and translation support. Encouraging local agencies to use interpreting services is an ongoing priority.

Nelson has a range of services to help with

language support including social English classes, home tutoring, workplace learning, and a tertiary provider (NMIT) that has a suite of ESOL training at all levels and the provision of internationally recognized examinations such as IELTS¹⁴. Local language and refugee services work closely together to ensure that learners' needs are identified early and that there are clear pathways for language progression.

Skill recognition is an issue for many former refugees. Although lacking in formal education many develop a range of skills in refugee camps including carpentry, panel beating and mechanics skills. It is usually difficult for former refugees to use these skills in their new country as they have no qualifications, however, many would like opportunities to participate in apprenticeships or other bridging courses to help with this.

A Report from English Language Partners (ELP) Nelson

ELP Nelson has the highest proportion of refugees as learners compared to other ELP centres around NZ - calculated to be around 70% now of either refugees or families of refugees compared with 54% for all of NZ in 2010.

When assigning Home Tutors, ELP prioritises refugees and low-level English – most low-level English speakers are refugees.

In 2003 ELP started its first Literacy Class. Literacy Classes run for 10 hours per week for former refugees with little or no literacy in their own language. The Literacy learners were originally mainly Khmer

¹⁴International English Language Testing System

Krom – including some older women. ELP arranged childcare and transport (for approx 10 – 20 people). In 2010 there was a significant increase in the number of refugees arriving in Nelson with literacy needs (Chin, Kayan and Nepali-Bhutanese) so the class was changed to accommodate their needs. Childcare and transport are no longer provided but there is now a very high rate of attendance.

In 2010 ELP nationally developed a Responsibilities Framework setting out how they saw the needs of refugees and migrants for English language support. ELP's experience shows many refugees may need 10 hours per week for seven years

In 2011, ELP received extra funding for a second Literacy Class. They now run one Literacy Class at St John's Church (10 hours, three mornings) and one at 2 Bridge St (10 hours, four mornings). The aim is to progress Literacy learners along, so many start in the St John's class, then move to the Bridge St class and then go to the work-focused classes at NMIT, hopefully leading to employment.

There is now good cooperation between

Refugee Services and the Adult ESOL classes at ELP, NMIT and Victory School so that before new refugees arrive, the agencies meet and decide which class is best for each of them. New intakes are assessed in Mangere and then assessed again in Nelson.

English Language Partners also runs:

- **English for Employees** classes for learners who are permanent residents and in work. Classes are approx 2.5 hours p.w. focussed on work-related English eg write CV/apply for new jobs. Focus on needs of learners, not just employers needs.
- **Community English and Craft Class** aimed at isolated women eg Kayan women. It encourages social contact and the use of English in a practical setting. Run by volunteer facilitators at Nelson Public Library so learners become familiar with using the library and the resources there.
- **English Language Groups** to practice, encourage and support conversation in English (1.5 hours per week).

Existing Services and Activities

Some services, activities and resources are currently available for refugees in relation to education, knowledge and skills development issues. Key services include:

English Language Services

ELP Nelson – English Language Partners Classes (all free)

- Literacy Classes

- English for Employees
- English Language Groups
- Community English and Craft Class
- One on One Home Tutor

Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology Classes

- English for the Workplace (seafood processing/horticulture focus) - Fee

free as funded by Intensive Literacy and Numeracy Targeted ESOL -60 places annually

- Certificate in English as an Additional Language Level 3 – 40 Semester long places annually – Fee free as funded by Refugee English Grant
- Certificate in Tertiary Study (L2) – Cost (\$500 per Semester)
- Certificate in Tertiary Study (L4) (English Language) – Fee free as funded by Refugee English Grant
- English Online – Cost \$40 per month
- Over 60 Programmes at Certificate, Diploma and Degree level - Costs apply, varies depending on programme. Studylink Loans and Allowances available.

Victory Adult ESOL - Classes for 2012

These classes are held on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9.15am - 12.15pm. They are held during primary school terms only. Childcare for pre-schoolers is available, and transport if needed.

Other Community English Language Classes

- Monday Haven Community Centre - Corner of Collingwood & Grove Street, Nelson, 1-2 pm Free

Computers in Homes (CIH) - 73 refugee families over the past six years) ALL families with children aged 8 and above now have computers and internet.

RAS - Tamariki Kahukura

(Rainbow Programme 2011) - After school programmes expanded, now well over 100 students enrolled in three programmes

Victory Primary School

- Bilingual liaison workers and /or bilingual tutors
- YIKES International (age 5+)
- Victory Homework Academy (VHA Y5-8 students)
- Refugee After School Homework (Secondary students)
- Refugee Education Coordinators - Pre School to Intermediate Dianne Goodwin / Secondary (From T2 2012) Marion Janke

New Migrant Sewing Club Tuesday 9am-12pm (no funding - Volunteers)

Feedback From Focus Groups¹⁵

a. Main themes

1. Learning English
2. Challenges of study
3. Costs
4. Children at school
5. Other issues

1. Learning English

'English classes at NMIT are going very well'

'Low education, low English'

'Learn language so I can speak as good as the Kiwis'

'It is good to go to college to learn and practice English' (youth)

¹⁵This feedback comprises direct quotes from focus group participants or notes as interpreted and presented by facilitators.

'We must learn more English to get a job but it is hard to get a job if our English is not good'

'Unemployment –difficult with little English – we need to know more information'

'Be able to speak English well and get a good job'

'Low level of English language'

'Pronunciation is difficult'

'Keep going with learning English'

'We would like to learn a different way'

'We would like to be taught how to pronounce English and learn correct grammar'

'Learning to communicate better'

'Continued struggling with language'

'Communication gap'

'Have to use sign language to communicate'

'Too shy to speak in case I make a mistake'

'Unable to read any important mail'

'Have more practice for reading, writing, speaking English'

'We need to learn more English skill'

'Pathways to further learning – don't pass English assessment'

'Can't speak English well'

'Be able to speak English well'

'Speak English more'

'Slow progress in learning English even with help'

'Have energy and time to study English and local culture'

'Government gives opportunity to go to

classes and help for understanding English and way of life'

'Need to learn English before any change can happen'

'We want them to mingle more with the Kiwi girls so they can learn more English. Too much talking Chin at school!'

'English class is very good for us'

'Availability of classes'

'ELP literacy class is very good / excellent!'

'Education – we can read and write. NMIT, Victory, ELP we learn more'

'Education – not long enough to learn well'

'Our English classroom is overcrowded and noisy. We want a separate classroom for each English class – now we have two classes in one classroom'

'Education - we would like to study for a longer time'

'Have a home tutor'

'Lapse in time when intakes arrive and classes start'

'English language tuition has improved so much, even over that last year.'

'Trade Academies are great opportunity for young people to follow careers that are not language based'

'We do not get enough English lessons in order to speak English confidently with others. We want 5 mornings of English classes each week, not just three'

'Education system – coping well' (aged 25 – 40yrs)

'Wanted a home tutor,'

'I asked a long time ago to get a Home Tutor. I rang up but I don't know where to go to go to the office'

'I do not have an English class now and many women wish to start learning again. This is very important for us because it is easier to get work. We can speak and understand better.'

2. Challenges of study

'I never study in the past but now I have a chance to study and I meet lots of people at school. It makes me happy. I would like to have a Zomi friend about the same age as me.'

'Secondary education is difficult as the teacher does speak quickly because I can not write down quickly.'

'In NZ schools our children get enrolled at their age level but they don't have enough previous education. They get depressed because they can't get the help they need.'

Children are placed in mainstream classes by themselves and they feel isolated, especially in high school.'

'Important, especially for older people to feel secure in educational environment – not to be pushed beyond limits.'

'My main issue is school-finish school, going for higher level of school, NMIT.'

'Transport, 10 years ago, not enough public transport, I have to bike to Richmond for work. My priority is my family, my children education, being a single parent, as a father, I want to upgrade my skill by going to NMIT.'

'Be able to continue education'

'Need assistance in class (bi-lingual) to help them understand'

'May be in "lost: stage – children at school need extra support e.g ESOL classes, homework programmes, bi-lingual teacher'

'3 of us are studying, 1 at Secondary school and 2 at NMIT" (youth)

'I am going back to study IT course after paying off my debt'

3. Costs

'Parents can't afford school camps and their children miss out.'

'For large families the school fees are too high'

'School notices for events are too confusing. We hand over the money they ask for but we don't always know what it is for.'

'High fee charged by kindergarten – amount of money received is not sufficient to pay this.'

4. Children at school

'Education good for children'

'Mainstreaming is not good for refugee and migrant high school students.'

'Some of the children need extra help in school'

'Education for children is good, children are learning fast and helping at home'

'Extra support in schools being used, e.g Homework classes'

'It's good that children of our community are doing well – but a few of them are struggling with language'

'It is good for our children to learn English but they also need to learn their own language'

'Before we had been picked up to go to school. It is good on a fine day but it is difficult for us when we have to walk the children to school in the rain. If we have babies, it is difficult to get there in time sometimes.'

'Children are between the two worlds, their parents can't guide them as they are illiterate. Most of the parents can't help with their school work, but kids are happy at school.'

'Two of the grandchildren go to school. 1 girl

is at intermediate School, and one is at primary school. We are lucky because the schools are close by.'

'Liaison people at both colleges (Boys and Nelson Girls) where most children of refugee families go to school.'

'Parents can't communicate with teachers about their children'

'Happy - they believe their children are getting a good education'

'Believe children are doing well at school'

'Appreciate and like everything about school'

'At Nelson College for Girls all our children are in the same class and we like them to learn in mixed classes.'

'It has been good to have transport for children who live far away from school'

5. Other issues

'Would like a workshop for basic car fixing course'

'Poor education means it is hard to get a good job'

'We want to get transport to go to school for our children'

'Driving makes it easy to go to school' (youth)

'They are keen on learning how to sew clothes, and learn to drive.'

'Free technical course needed (e.g. computer skill, driving, or any job orientated skills)'

'Some agencies could teach driving – especially for women'

'Help with training for jobs'

'Kids are going to university – three from Chin community are at university doing engineering and accounting.'

Transport issues 2006 – 2012 (report provided by Victory primary school)

When the FACs funding (from Settling In) was originally applied for, around 2006, it was in response to a need – ie safety for new arrival refugees who lived more than 1.5 km from the school, particularly children under eight years old with:

- minimal English language skills
- minimal knowledge of road safety rules.

Previously assistance had been available from Ministry of Education however this was no longer an option.

Assistance to transport girls from Nelson College For Girls gave access to refugee afterschool study support and bilingual tutors. In 2010, arrangements were made to rent the charity van owned by Nelson Intermediate School. This did not work so well so it was decided in February 2011 to lease a van which was used for transport for refugee students to and from school; collecting girls from the College at 3.20pm to ensure they arrived in time for afterschool homework programmes three days weekly. The van was also used for transport for refugee women and preschoolers three mornings weekly to assist with attendance at ESOL classes and for various school trips.

At the beginning of term 2, 2012, an agreement was made with YMCA to use their van for collecting “at risk” refugee children before school and with Victory Anglican Church to return students to their homes at 4.45pm following afterschool programmes.

These are contracted on a ‘costs covering’ basis.

The Secondary afterschool programme was suspended until funding approval at the end of term 1, and due to transport funding constraints it was decided to ask girls to walk to Victory School. They do not arrive by 3.30pm when the programme begins, but are usually there by 3.45pm. Girls familiar with the route and safety issues are encouraged to assist new students to attend.

b. What is working well?

- Inter-provider collaboration providing pathways for learners at all levels and with different aspirations (see Appendix 3)
- Government funding for ESOL, without which none of the provision above can exist. Adult Community Education Fund (ACE), Intensive Literacy and Numeracy Targeted ESOL (ILN ESOL), Refugee English Grant (REG) all allow learners to study fee free. In 2010, the government withdrew ILN and REG funding, meaning two thirds of learner places disappeared. This was a huge loss and meant that many former refugees were closed out of pathways to employment, further training and community involvement. A lobby group consisting of national bodies such as TESOLANZ, researchers at Victoria University, Refugee Services and the support of Ministers such as Nick Smith helped in the reinstatement of these funds for 2012. Awareness of these funds and the huge effort on the part of providers to apply for, allocate and comply with the funding criteria should be recognised as vital to the ongoing success of Nelson as a resettlement centre. Without these funds and ESOL programmes, all of the areas of work and discussion in this report are negatively impacted.
- Quality of ESOL provision – the quality of the programmes in Nelson run by all providers is assured by governing bodies such as NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission. The training and qualifications offered are provided by well trained and highly qualified academics (Schools and NMIT), or well trained volunteers (ELP home tutors). The quality of provision and responsiveness to community needs is advanced in Nelson – programmes such as Driver Training (ELP and ALS), Workplace Literacy (ALS) and Workplace English for Seafood industry (NMIT) are examples of responsive education provision.
- Work and Income allowing learners to remain on Unemployment Benefit Training allowance when studying ESOL rather than having to job seek when not ready to be an effective job seeker, or apply for Studylink allowances which are high risk for low level learners.
- Relationships formed in ESOL classes – different cultures have the chance to mix and some meaningful connections have been made, particularly between Japanese international students and Bhutanese learners. This is great for English learning as well as personally fulfilling.
- The model provided by Victory Primary School which is achieving good results for children and strong engagement with former refugee families.
- Support from Settling In with transport for children - Refugee parents are under significant stress on arrival in their new home and are very appreciative of provision of transport to school for their primary

aged child/children who have little or no knowledge of New Zealand road rules, language or cultural expectations. Usually at least one parent will have passed restricted drivers licence and purchased a car within two years of arrival, by which time additional children will have arrived who require transport assistance. The transport assistance:

- gives parents a greater sense of security, knowing that their children are safe during the time between leaving home and arriving back
- gives these children the opportunity to participate in the educational, social and cultural activities provided in after school programmes.

c. What is not working well?

- Occasionally work hours may prevent parents from being able to deliver their

child to or from school.

- The transition to a western style education, particularly regarding learners putting in the required self study time outside of class. NMIT has a clear focus on training learners to be independent in their study and good self study facilities, but reports that these are not used as well as they could be.

Further Action and Opportunities

A number of opportunities and suggestions for further action have been identified through the focus groups and consultation process. Some of these have been accorded priority status with agreed outcomes, success measures, actions and key partners identified. These will be combined with priority actions for other key findings areas and incorporated into an overarching action plan. Other suggestions have been noted for future attention.

a. Priority Actions

Priority Action:	Improve opportunities for developing English language skills and increase local understanding of the vital impact language acquisition has on positive settlement
Target Population:	Former refugees of all ages
Available Data:	Attendance levels at existing English classes Outcomes for education, training and employment data Participation of specific groups (eg older refugees) in social English classes
Story behind the Data:	While there is an increasing focus on employment for refugees, it is not always well understood how important the ability to speak and write English is as a determinant for all outcomes in relation to social and economic wellbeing. Although local language providers work with a high degree of co-operation, former refugees in Nelson do not always have access to appropriate English language support.

What We Want to Achieve (outcome)	More opportunities for former refugees to access English language support at appropriate levels A clear continuum of English language support Good understanding in the wider community and within key agencies involved with refugee communities that: • learning English is a basic prerequisite for good settlement and future education, training and employment. • Language skills enable former refugees to contribute to the wider community and reduce social isolation
Measures of Success (indicators)	• Attendance numbers at existing English classes • Number of refugees undertaking tertiary education • Number of refugees entering training programmes • Number of refugees gaining work • Number of refugees gaining highly skilled work • Number of older refugees learning English
Partners	• English Language Partners • Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology • Refugee Services • Settling In • Victory Primary School
What Steps We're Taking (actions)	• Continue to foster excellent collaboration between agencies to ensure clear pathways through different levels of English tuition through to workplace support or tertiary education. • Promote the value of effective language support within the wider community • Support training providers by publicly acknowledging the importance and effectiveness of Government funding and keeping free ESOL provision at the top of the agenda • Explore opportunities to boost / maximise funding levels for language support in Nelson
Performance Measures (evaluating our work)	• High level of employment outcomes for refugees • High achievement levels for refugee children at primary and secondary school • Older people participating in the community and being able to communicate in English, contributing to general wellbeing of their families and the Nelson community

b. Further Opportunities and Suggestions

- Discussion with Work and Income about what the reforms will mean for former refugees
- More encouragement/resources/initiatives for adult learners to undertake self study and engage with English speaking people in the community for their own learning

3.7 ECONOMIC WELLBEING

Introduction

‘Despite the application in different places, I did not get a job’

‘Majority of Chin refugees were farmers at home. They find working on farms and fish factory in Nelson okay.’

‘Refugees tend not to use credit cards and do not have debt. They work and they save!’

‘Change habit-work harder to change to a better life!’

Economic wellbeing is a subjective term but is generally associated with having a reasonable and regular form of income to support a lifestyle that includes decent housing, food and education opportunities for all family members. For most people income is acquired as a result of paid employment. For any newcomer to New Zealand, employment is an important marker of how well they have integrated into their new society. As well as being a source of income, employment also provides opportunities for meeting people, gaining new work skills and experiences and improving English language skills. Former refugees with little English, limited work experience and years of life in a refugee camp face enormous challenges getting jobs, particularly in tough financial times. A recent report looking at outcomes for quota refugees¹⁶ in New Zealand concludes that ‘ten years on’ employment is still the main area of dissatisfaction for this group and along with English language for older people and women, remains the main challenge. Focus groups with local former refugees confirm that finding employment is often very difficult and that this impacts on them in a number

of ways – it lowers their confidence and self esteem, and it makes it difficult for them to meet new people, practice their English and improve their standard of living. For many the increasing cost of living and difficult economic climate is also compromising their economic wellbeing; although it is noted that many are used to living extremely frugally as a result of their refugee camp experiences and so cope reasonably well.

In Nelson, a number of former refugees do have paid work, most notably in horticulture, viticulture, seafood processing, supermarkets and in social service organisations that deal with newcomers. Language is a real problem for some in terms of getting work and coping in the workplace. Some former refugees have set up successful local businesses in Nelson.

Work and Income notes that former refugees made up 7.3% of the registered unemployed at the end of May 2012. Ongoing health issues for some former refugees, usually as a direct result of their previous experiences, presents huge barriers in terms of gaining paid employment. Former refugees report that they sometimes find it difficult understanding the income support system and their entitlements, and that they would like more clarity and help with this.



¹⁶Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, (Labour Group) (2012)

Information provided by Work and Income, Nelson

Employment

Many former refugees have found local employment in horticulture, viticulture and seafood processing. Individuals have also found employment in a range of other organisations and businesses, including Countdown, English Language Partners, Victory School, Refugee Services, Nelson Newcomers Network, Y Kids, Cawthorn Institute, Redwood Cellars and Britannia Textiles. There are also a number of former refugees who are self employed.

At 29 May 2012, there was a total of 629 people registered for Unemployment Benefit (UB) in the Nelson-Richmond area. Of these, 46 were identified as former refugees from Myanmar or Bhutan. This equates to 7.3% of the UB population.

Assistance into Employment

All clients, including refugees, can access Work and Income services aimed at assisting people into employment. As part of their induction programme, all refugees are introduced to a Work and Income case manager, and provided with information on how to access financial assistance, and assistance into employment.

Nelson's refugee community is also supported by other Ministry of Social Development service lines, notably by a Family and Community Services initiative Settling In. This program has two specialist community development practitioners based in Nelson. These people work collaboratively and intersectorally with a rights and strengths based approach at a local level. They work directly with members of refugee and migrant communities to help them find solutions to their own needs, as well as collaborating with wider services and agencies to support refugee settlement in Nelson.

In regard to purchasing contracted employment services, Work and Income's Nelson Region (including Marlborough and the West Coast) has \$600,000.00 available for Employment Assistance to clients in receipt of Unemployment Benefit. Of this \$177,100.00 is applied to the Nelson/Richmond population. Refugee clients are eligible, and do access, some of these services purchased by the \$177,100.00. For example, Work and Income in Nelson has promoted a pilot driving programme for seven former refugee people with restricted licences.

However in proportionate terms, the size of the refugee cohort means that it is not cost-effective to purchase specifically targeted services. A 7.3% application of the available funding would be \$12,928 which is below what any targeted contract could usefully purchase.

Pathways to Employment

Pathways to Employment is a pilot project currently operating in Hamilton and Wellington. It involves having a specialised position to support refugee employment. Evaluation results from the two pilots have been mixed, with uncertain outcomes.

Although there are no present plans to extend the Pathways to Employment programme into Nelson, consideration is being given to supporting an application by local service providers for funding under Work and Income's Migrant Employment Assistance (MEA) programme. MEA provides funding for projects that help migrants develop skills that will lead to employment. Discussions have been held with potential providers and subject to funding being available a bid may be made later this year.

Work and Income Statistics for Former Refugees in Nelson (as at 8 October 2012)

Benefit	Bhutan	Myanmar	Totals
Domestic purposes benefit		7	7
Emergency benefit		1	1
Invalids benefit		4	4
Sickness benefit		4	4
Unemployment benefit	11	25	36
Unemployment benefit training	4	16	20
Grand Total	15	57	72

Existing Services and Activities

Some services are available to support newcomers to improve their economic well-being. Key services include:

- Work and Income
- NMIT - Workplace Literacy programme

- Three employers in Nelson employing a high number of former refugees
- Settlement Support New Zealand – Nelson
- Careers New Zealand

Feedback From Focus Groups¹⁷

a. Main themes

1. Finding employment
2. Work and English
3. Cost of living
4. Working conditions
5. Work and Income

1. Finding employment

‘Not enough work available’

‘No work skills even if the job vacancy arises’

‘Despite the application in different places, I did not get a job’

‘We have four people working in our family. Three people work on John’s Farm and one

works at Mussel Factory. My brother’s and sister-in law work hard. They like working on the farm.’

‘I am very happy with my employment’

‘Hard to get a job for student in the holiday’

‘Appropriate employment is an issue – difficult to get first job’

‘Majority of Chin refugees were farmers at home. They find working on farms and fish factory in Nelson okay.’

‘One man was recommended by Refugee Services to local construction company for scaffolding work. He’s now in carpentry and has really supportive employer.’

Nelson needs more employers like that to give people a chance to get meaningful employment.’

¹⁷This feedback comprises direct quotes from focus group participants or notes as interpreted and presented by facilitators.

'Need skills for women to work'

'Help with employment'

'Change belief-make it more realistic and do-able'

'Frustration with employment opportunities'

'One refugee decided to move out from "traditional" workplaces, e.g Ewers (a local employer) has 126 refugee staff. Went to work in a new place to "break the mould" – these people are good role models for others who want to "be Kiwi"!!'

'Some people have work. My husband works in the day and I work at night. We work with mussels.'

'Some people work on the farm and in the supermarket'

2. Work and English

'Newer people need to get English before we can work'

'Chin going into employment with no English – boys going to work too soon and not learning English'

'People go to Sealord – NMIT Workplace Literacy programme where they get information e.g. OSH. This works very well.'

'Sometimes find it difficult to understand English so that makes it difficult to understand at work so we want to move somewhere else.'

'We must learn more English to get a job but it is hard to get a job if our English is not good'

'We want more people in our community who are literate in English to help less literate people to find jobs and make connections to find jobs.'

'People arriving with no English are not ready for work within 6 to 12 months'

3. Cost of living

'Rental houses are expensive and high cost of power, telephone, water, leaves little money for food, clothing and petrol.'

'I want to save more money and work hard'

'Many families are on benefits/low wages and can't meet their children's material needs/expectations e.g. clothing'

'Better food/buying power'

'Parents can't afford school camps and their children miss out.'

'We can't buy many things because we do not have much money.'

'Living cost is rising and there is not enough money to cover living cost'

'We work for extra money to support family (Youth)'

'Help with extra money for study (Youth)'

'Driving expenses and insurance costs'

'Do my own gardening to reduce our food price'

'Cost of electricity – cost of living'

'Cost of housing – very expensive'

'Living costs increase but income stays the same'

'Shortage of money e.g for power and phone bills, school fees, and contributions e.g school trips'

'Increases in rent'

'We cannot afford to look after our children as well as we used to'

'Better job so I can buy my own house – go to technical training course'

'Cannot buy food because of expensive food'

'Refugees tend not to use credit cards and do

not have debt. They work and they save!

'Benefit increase does not meet the current inflation rate'

'They live in a very frugal way'

'They are frugal from their refugee camp experiences'

4. Working conditions

'Working hours decreasing so less income'

'Different payment between permanent and casual worker'

'More people are working hard'

'Some people work on the farm and get good money'

5. Work and Income

'Work and Income is a big part of issues. '

'People need a lot of support to approach Work and Income'

'Invalid Benefit – 57 – being moved on to Unemployment Benefit. Can't speak English and still homesick. Went to Workbridge. Cannot read and write. Referral to Community Law.'

'Experienced Case Managers are often promoted'

'Language – WINZ pressing us to go for work'

'Even disabled get pressured to go to work'

'Language – WINZ pressing us to go to work even though we can't even read letters'

'Learn driving so that I can go for work and off the Work and Income benefit – will learn computer on my own so that I can pass driving test'

'People don't want to be on a benefit for more than a year'

'When couples are on benefits, the husband and wife spend too much time together'

'Families don't understand how if a husband is working their benefit is cut and wife has no independent income.'

'Lack of clarity around rules..... a need to think they are being treated with respect and things to be fair!'

'Benefit not enough'

'Clarity re entitlements'

b. What is working well?

- Good liaison between local refugee support services and Work and Income staff about employment opportunities
- A number of supportive employers who will give refugees a chance

c. What is not working well?

- Reported issues with the attitude of some Work and Income front desk staff and a lack of cultural understanding in many government agencies
- Access to affordable quality childcare so both parents can work

Further Action and Opportunities

A number of opportunities and suggestions for further action have been identified through the focus groups and consultation process. Some of these have been accorded priority status with agreed outcomes, success measures, actions and key partners identified. These will be combined with priority actions for other key findings areas and incorporated into an overarching action plan. Other suggestions have been noted for future attention.

a. Priority Actions

Priority Action:	Improve access to meaningful employment, including increased opportunities for women to work once their children are at school
Target Population:	Refugee working age adults including women
Available Data:	Work and Income statistics Local knowledge (through RS and NMC) Community survey
Story behind the Data:	Range of employment barriers faced by former refugees e.g. limited opportunities for English language support Cross cultural misunderstandings / differences (e.g. don't want to ask for help) Examples of discriminatory employer attitudes Changing requirements for Work and Income around employment

What We Want to Achieve (outcome)	• A range of opportunities for former refugees to participate in meaningful employment in Nelson • Increase in the support available to help former refugees transition into paid work and to reduce existing barriers • More former refugee women participating in the local Nelson workforce
Measures of Success (indicators)	• Refugees participating in training leading to employment (ETE outcomes) • Work readiness of refugee women when their children go to school
Partners	• NMC • Refugee Services • Nelson Refugee Forum • ELP • NMIT • Victory ESOL classes • Work and Income • EDA • Chamber of Commerce • SSNZ • Media
What Steps We're Taking (actions)	• Appointment of Community Development worker at Refugee Services focusing on employment • Pathways to employment project coordinating workplace opportunities for all levels • Raising awareness with employers about this potential labour pool • Profiling refugee workers to employer networks to give refugees their first chance at employment in NZ • Strategies to increase volunteer opportunities for former refugees as a stepping stone to paid employment

Performance Measures
(evaluating our work)

Work and Income data
Employer surveys
Local workplace diversity data

b. Further Opportunities and Suggestions

- Maintain regular contact with Work and Income case managers and provide support to ensure consistent services
- Employment is a big issue for former refugees and Nelson needs a Work Liaison contact person. This may be

resolved through the recent appointment of a Community Development worker with Refugee Services, who will focus on employment as a key outcome. This position is funded through the Department of Internal Affairs.



Progress to date and priority actions

4.1 Progress and Achievements

Since the inception of the Settling In project in Nelson (for former refugees) and the process to develop this community report, a significant amount of related work has already been achieved. Some of these achievements are noted below:

- Three former refugee communities have established themselves as incorporated societies and two have become registered charities.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been developed between the Victory Health Centre, Refugee Services Aotearoa NZ, Settling In and the Pasifika Trust to enable an improved and holistic approach to supporting former refugees which integrates health, education and social development needs.
- An increased number of groups are attending the six weekly Nelson Refugee Forum and facilitation of this forum now sits with the former refugees themselves.
- A number of refugee background youth now train, free of charge, at the Seido Karate Dojo, thanks to the efforts of the Nelson Multicultural Council fieldworker and the generous sponsorship of the Dojo.
- Over 100 people from government and non-government organisations, health and law agencies who work with refugees, attended a day-long seminar “Working across Cultures in the Prevention of Family Violence, Focusing on Refugees and Migrants” delivered by Dr. Love Chile. This was funded under the IGNITE Project and organised by Refugee Services Aotearoa NZ, Nelson Multicultural Council, Settling In and Te Rito.

- Nelson Multicultural Council had input into the Nelson City Council’s Social Wellbeing Policy review, Long Term Council Community Plan and both the Tasman District Council and the Nelson City Council Draft Annual Plans – ensuring that migrant and former refugee perspectives are included.
- Two former refugee community groups were successful recipients of Nelson City Council funding in the latest funding round.
- The delivery of many initiatives through the IGNITE project, including, Parenting in a New Zealand Context courses, English for Driver Licence courses, Interpreting Support, Training for Interpreters, Legal Education for Community Groups, Energy Conservation sessions and a Bike Maintenance Workshop.

4.2 Priority Actions for the Next 12 Months

For each of the key findings areas priority actions, action partners and performance measures and outcomes were agreed. A number of steps were also identified to support the achievement of these outcomes. This will provide the foundation for work over the next 12 months. The following priority actions have been determined for each area:

Access to Services

- Secure sustainable funding to ensure ongoing access to quality interpreting services for mainstream organisations in Nelson

Families, Children, Youth and Older People

- Work collaboratively to support happy families in stable communities with a focus on positive parenting

Appreciation of Diversity

- Develop strategies to increase the numbers of former refugee people engaging with the Nelson host community and local activities

Healthy Lifestyle

- Work with local health and education providers to ensure more support for refugee youth around mental health issues, including education at schools

Safety and Security

- Improve feelings of safety for the former refugee population of Nelson

Knowledge and Skills

- Improve opportunities for developing English language skills and increase local understanding of the vital impact language acquisition has on positive settlement

Economic Wellbeing

- Improve access to meaningful employment including increased opportunities for women to work once their children are at school

5. References

Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment (Labour Group) (2012) *New Land, New Life: Long-Term Settlement of Refugees in New Zealand*, Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment: Wellington.
(www.dol.govt.nz)

Nelson Multicultural Council, Refugee Services Aotearoa NZ, Settling In (2012) *New Beginnings: Refugees Stories – Nelson*: Nelson
(www.nelsonmulticultural.co.nz)

Refugee Services Aotearoa NZ website
(www.refugeeservices.co.nz)

Appendix 1

Background to this 'Settling In Refugees in Nelson' Project

The idea of putting together a report on refugees in Nelson was first mooted in late 2011 as part of discussions with the IGNITE working party. There was general concern that a lot of the planning for the former refugee community was happening without sufficient statistical and qualitative understanding and context to inform these decisions. In order to better meet the needs of former refugees and the host community, it was decided to undertake a Settling In report, with the support of a wide range of agencies.

“Settling In Refugees in Nelson” was initiated in Nelson in November 2011 with the aim of finding out more about the settlement experiences of former refugees in Nelson and how these might be improved. Discussion groups were held with refugee communities to hear their stories and to get their suggestions. A local working group was established to bring together all of the information and develop an action plan to address any concerns. This project was accorded very high importance as new refugees continue to arrive in Nelson and existing communities continue to grow and make a significant contribution to Nelson. They are becoming an important and visible part of our city’s future.

The Settling In project is coordinated by Family and Community Services. The Settling In team provided resources and support and were available to help with the discussion groups. Those involved in focus groups were assured about the confidentiality of this process which helped to encourage free and frank discussions. This is an important aspect of the Settling In focus group process enabling people to feel confident to express their true feelings.

Focus Groups and Report Development

The original timeframe for focus groups set a completion date of early 2012, but the reality of getting people together with appropriate facilitators and interpreters was more challenging than initially thought. While there was considerable goodwill for this to happen, in the end, it took until mid year for the focus group process to be completed.

Settling In staff compiled the findings of the focus groups and developed this report in conjunction with the *Looking Back Moving Forward* group which meets six weekly to discuss refugee issues. This group consists of representatives from former refugee communities, NGOs and government agencies. Their comments have provided valuable insight and experience to ensure the report is a fair representation of the views of local refugees and of agencies working alongside them.



Appendix 2

Service Directory - Services working alongside former Refugees in Nelson*

Refugee Services

- Support for first year of settlement
- Social worker
- Case worker
- Cross cultural workers
- Provision of interpreters
- Support workers
- National/local advocacy

Nelson Multicultural Council

- Field worker
- Fund holder for CRF Ignite project
- Intercultural Awareness & Communication training
- Speak Out Nelson Tasman
- Transition Service from RS
- Multicultural Mums & Toddlers group
- Maintains the Interpreters list that is provided to NMDHB, Justice Dept, Corrections and community organisations.
- Nelson Newcomers Network
- Weekly social for Cambodian seniors
- Events that raise the profile of former refugees unique culture e.g. Race Unity Day
- Local advocacy

Settling In

- Facilitates the *Looking Back Moving Forward* - Refugee Health & Wellbeing Forum
- Delivers a community development programme

- Facilitates the Nelson Refugee Forum
- Develops Settling In needs analysis reports
- Provides national/local advocacy
- Funder

Victory Primary School

- Refugee Education Coordinator
- Bilingual liaison
- Rainbow programme
- YIKES
- Victory Homework Academy
- Adult ESOL classes
- Computers in Homes programme

Victory Community Centre

- Provides opportunities for community participation e.g. Matariki Festival, 'Lark in the Park' Friday evening activities in Victory Park in the summer months, 'Victory Little Day Out' as well as a range of activities offered in the centre from chess to Zumba!
- Provides facilities for hire
- Provides opportunities for community participation

Victory Community Health

- Be Well Nurse
- Smoking cessation
- Counselling
- Plunket

English Language Partners

- English for employees
- Home tutors

- Social classes
- Craft class for women

Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology

- ESOL classes
- Mainstream classes
- English for interpreters i.e. specific purposes

Nelson Bays Community Law

- Immigration information
- Refugee assistance
- Education re New Zealand Law

Nelson Tasman Settlement Support

- Information
- Workshops

Nelson Bays Primary Health Organisation

- Funding for interpreters

Ministry of Social Development

- Funding
- Work & Income

Nelson College

- Coordinator for refugee students

Nelson Intermediate School

Nelson College for Girls

Ministry of Education

- Funder
- Southern Region Refugee Education Coordinator

New Zealand Police

- Ethnic Liaison Officer
- Annual Global Soccer Festival tournament

YMCA

- Y Kids Child Care

Other service providers

- Family Start
- Stopping Violence Services
- Schools
- Kindergartens
- Mainstream service providers

NB: This is by no means a complete picture of all the community organisations/services working with and/or representing people from refugee backgrounds in our region- we have tried to reflect the key organisations/services in this sector.



**Nelson Multicultural
Resource Centre**
2 - 4 Bridge St, Nelson

Family and Community Services

Settling Relationship Managers
- Claire Nichols and Brigid Ryan
2 Bridge St, Nelson | P: 03 539 0565
E: claire.nichols012@msd.govt.nz
P: 03 5402321 E: ryan.will@xtra.co.nz
W: www.familyservices.govt.nz

Refugee Services Aotearoa NZ

Area Manager: - Gabrielle Humphreys P: 03 548 4978
Social Worker - Barbara Whitaker P: 03 5394509
Case Worker - Chandra Dahal P: 03 5394509
Cross Cultural Workers - Sui Ting & Beda Dahal
Community Development Worker - Keen Yee
132-134 Bridge Street, Nelson (upstairs)
E: Gabrielle.Humphreys@refugeeservices.org.nz
E: Barb.Whitaker@refugeeservices.org.nz
E: Keen.Yee@refugeeservices.org.nz
W: www.refugeeservices.org.nz

New Zealand Police

Ethnic Liaison Officer - David Cogger
P: 03 545 9625 | E: david.cogger@police.govt.nz

**Nelson Marlborough Institute of
Technology**

English Language Centre - Claire Keenan
P: 03 546 9175 x 744
E: claire.keenan@nmit.ac.nz

Nelson Bays Community Law

Manager: Peter Riley | P: 03 548 1288
E: peter@nelsoncommunitylaw.org.nz

Nelson College

Refugee Student coordinator - Lauren Walton
P: 03 548 3099 | E: lo@nelcollege.school.nz

English Language Partners

Manager - Doug Adam
Coordinator - Ali Morton
2 Bridge St, Nelson | P: 5394848
E: doug.adam@englishlanguage.org.nz
E: ali.morton@englishlanguage.org.nz
W: www.englishlanguage.org.nz

Nelson Multicultural Council

Coordinator - Evey McAuliffe
4 Bridge St, Nelson | P: 03 5390030
E: info@nelsonmulticultural.co.nz
W: www.nelsonmulticultural.co.nz

Victory School

Refugee Education Coordinator - Dianne Goodwin
E: diannegoodwin@victory.school.nz
ESOL bilingual aide/VHA tutor/ Computers in
Homes bilingual liaison/Refugee Bilingual liaison
- Sue Leya E: sueleya367@yahoo.com
Adult English language class
- Diane Homer E: homer.diane@gmail.com

Nelson Refugee Forum

C/- Nelson Multicultural Council
2 Bridge Street, Nelson

Victory Community Health Centre

Be Well Nurse - Penny Molner
P: 03 546 8385 | E: penny@victory.school.nz

Ministry of Education

Southern Region Refugee Education Coordinator
- Hassan Ibrahim | P: 03 378 7756
E: hassan.ibrahim@minedu.govt.nz

**Settlement Support New Zealand
(Nelson)**

Coordinator: Sonny Alesana
Nelson City Council | P: 03 546 0305
E: sonny.alesana@ncc.govt.nz
W: www.nelsontasmansettlementsupport.co.nz

Appendix 3

Diagram of English Language Training Providers - Learning Opportunities for Adults in Nelson (All fee free)



Appendix 4

Background to Burmese and Bhutanese refugees (Department of Labour resource)

Burma is one of the most ethnically diverse nations in the world. Out of the approximately 45 million people in Burma, around one third come from ethnic minority groups, principally the Mon, Kachins, Chins, Shans, and Karen, each of which have traditionally dominated a particular area of the country. When Burma regained independence from Britain in 1947, the majority ethnic group (Burman) ignored many of the promises made to ethnic minorities by the British. As a consequence, many ethnic groups formed armed resistance movements in opposition to the Burman dominated-government.

A coup in 1962 installed a repressive military regime in power, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), which has resisted any return to democracy since. The SPDC is one of the world's most repressive regimes and regularly restricts the basic rights and freedoms of all Burmese citizens. Following a student uprising in 1988, the military government staged an unprecedented crackdown on opponents of the regime, leaving thousands dead and wounded, while large numbers were forced to flee to the Thai border. While political parties promoting democracy won over 80% of the votes in the 1990 election, the military regime ignored the wishes of the Burmese people and imposed even harsher tactics against their opponents – pro democracy activists and ethnic minorities. Those considered opponents of the regime, as well as those perceived to be supporters of opponents, continue to face a real risk of human rights violations such as extra judicial executions, torture, forced labour, forced relocation, rape and oppression. Since the SPDC began forcibly relocating minority

ethnic groups, they have destroyed nearly 3000 villages, particularly in areas of active ethnic insurgency.

In 2010, democratically elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi of the National League for Democracy (NLD) was released from house arrest, having spent most of the last 20 years in some form of detention. Also in 2010, elections saw a military junta replaced with a nominally civilian government backed by the armed forces. Since then, the new administration has embarked on a series of reforms, prompting the NLD to rejoin the political process. The April 2012 by-elections saw Ms Suu Kyi and 42 NLD members elected as MPs. Also in late April the EU agreed to suspend sanctions for a period of one year in recognition of the progress and “historic changes” made in Burma. As concerns are still held about conflict and human rights abuses, the sanctions can be reimposed if the improving situation was to reverse.

Conditions for Burmese refugees in Thailand and Malaysia: As of January 2012, Thailand was host to 92,000 registered refugees from Myanmar as well as an estimated 54,000 unregistered asylum-seekers in nine camps along the Thai-Myanmar border. The situation of refugees from Burma in camps in Thailand is one of the most protracted in the world. These refugees have been confined to nine closed camps since they began arriving in the 1980s. According to Thai law, those found outside the camps are subject to arrest and deportation. Legally, refugees have no right to employment. The prolonged confinement of Myanmar refugees in camps has created many social, psychological and protection concerns. The coping mechanisms of refugees have been

eroded, and the restrictions imposed on them have increased their dependence on assistance. As of January 2012 there were 217,618 persons of concern registered with UNHCR in Malaysia. Life for a refugee in Kuala Lumpur is challenging. Most are living in overcrowded urban conditions. Refugees cannot work legally and most live in fear of detention, despite having received a refugee card from UNHCR. Resettlement of detention cases is considered a priority by UNHCR, given the harsh conditions in detention as well as the risk of deportation back to Burma.

Burmese cultural considerations

- The traditional Burmese greeting is min-ga-la-ba
- It is considered rude to touch a person's head, because it is the "highest" point of the body. It is also considered taboo to touch another's feet, or to point with the foot, because the feet are considered the lowest.
- Burmese culture is paternalistic whereas New Zealand culture is largely based on gender equality
- Acknowledge the male parent first if present
- It is acceptable for men and women to shake hands
- It is important to give and expect returned eye contact
- Shoes are always taken off before entering homes
- A modest dress code is recommended
- It is ok to decline invitations for food and drinks but the host will often offer three times

Why would people from Bhutan be refugees?

Traditionally, the Lhotshampa people had little contact with the majority Drukpas ethnic group in Bhutan (who lived mostly in the north), and retained an essentially Nepalese way of life, including culture, religion (Hinduism as opposed to Buddhism), and language (Nepali). Until the mid-1980s, there was little evidence of animosity between the two groups. However, from the late 1980s, the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGB) began to suppress the religion, language, culture, and dress of the Lhotshampas and implemented a new citizenship law in 1985 that stripped many in the community of their citizenship rights. The Lhotshampa inevitably protested these actions, with the conflict reaching its peak in late 1990. A series of hunger strikes and public protests led to violent confrontations and deaths. The army was brought in to stem the protests, resulting in mass murder, rape, torture, and incarceration of the Lhotshampas. Other forms of intimidation included the closure of all schools in southern Bhutan, and the withdrawal of health and medical services. Tens of thousands of Lhotshampas were forced to leave Bhutan, and more fled 'voluntarily' in the face of continued arbitrary arrests, beating, rape, and robberies. By 2005 over 106,000 refugees had fled Bhutan - approximately 20% of the population. Return to Bhutan is currently not an option for the Bhutanese refugees. Human rights abuses by the Bhutanese authorities against the Lhotshampa people continued to date.

The situation for Bhutanese refugees in Nepal: The government of Nepal is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol. The Nepalese government has instituted policies which restrict the movement, activities, and political rights of

Bhutanese refugees, and resisted the possibility of integration into the Nepalese population.

The Bhutanese Lhotshampa refugees have lived in a protracted refugee situation in Nepal during the last 15-17 years, waiting for a solution from the bilateral process between the government of Bhutan and government of Nepal; however, no prospect of a solution is yet in sight.

An anti-resettlement element in the refugee camps exists and violence and threats are regularly directed at those involved in or promoting resettlement. Some oppose resettlement as they believe it will be used as the only solution instead of being able to return to Bhutan or being allowed to legally stay in Nepal. Housing in the refugee camps is in bamboo huts built by the refugees with materials supplied to them. They are crowded, present fire risks, leak, and are flooded in monsoons. There is no power, and cooking is done via a solar heated system. The camps are extremely dusty in summer, with virtually no lighting. Food hygiene is very poor. There are medical centres in the camps, although these are under resourced.

Cultural and religious considerations

- The common greeting is 'namaste' which is delivered with the hands together below the chin and a small bow of the head
- For Yes : shake your head from side to side, and for NO: nod your head up and down
- Sharing food is very common
- It is common to slurp tea and other hot drinks in restaurants and homes
- Nepalese families are extended and patrilineal.
- Marital rates are very high. Marriages are generally arranged by parents
- Nepalese culture is rigidly patriarchal, but women's status varies across Nepalese ethnicities
- Take off your shoes before entering a person's home
- Public displays of affection such as kissing may be considered offensive
- You may accept a handshake offered by both sexes male or female, but never offer your hand first to women. Hand shakes are more gentle than strong
- Its considered rude for a man to touch a women especially married women
- It is common to see same sex walking together hand in hand or with arms around each other – its a friendship gesture
- Superstition is a normal part of life



Photo Credits: Brittany Smith, Refugee Services