New Land, New Life: Refugee Integration and Pathways to Employment

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What I plan to talk about today

- Refugee Policy in NZ
- Quota Refugees Ten Years On programme of research
- Pathways to employment
- What is the Government doing to improve resettlement outcomes
Refugee Policy in New Zealand

- **Refugee Quota Programme**
  - Formal quota established 1987
  - 750 places a year
  - Orientation programme – 6 weeks

- **Successful refugee status claimants**
  - Relatively small numbers – 91 in 09/10
  - Numbers have decreased since 01/02

- **Family reunification policies**
  - Un-known number of people from ‘refugee-like’ situations
Quota Refugees Ten Years On: Perspectives on Integration, Community And Identity
Overall objective

- Build a platform of knowledge and understanding about integration, community and identity
- Give voice to former refugees and to inform future resettlement policy and service provision
Research Approach – Mixed Methods

- **Quantitative**
  - Face-to-face survey 512 people
  - 41% response rate

- **Qualitative**
  - Interviews with stakeholders
  - Six Focus Groups
  - In-depth interviews with 25 participants
Who came to NZ 1993 to 1999 through the Refugee Quota Category?

- **Country of origin**
  - Iraq – 29%
  - Vietnam – 19%
  - Somalia – 16%
  - Ethiopia – 15%
  - Other non-Africa – 15%
  - Other Africa – 7%

- **Gender**
  - Female - 44%
  - Male – 56%

- **Age group**
  - 0-19 – 36%
  - 20-29 – 26%
  - 30-44 – 29%
  - 45+ - 10%
New Land, New Life – Pathways to employment
What do former refugees themselves say about the importance of work?

- What are the three most important things for feeling part of NZ?
  - Top was having a good job (48%)
  - Other important things
    - Having family in NZ (44%)
    - Being able to speak English well (38%)
    - Feeling safe (38%)

- What are your personal Goals for the next 5 years?
  - Top goal was having a good job (46%)
Key employment findings

Prior to coming to NZ:
- 62% aged 13+ had worked

Work in New Zealand:
- 73% had worked in a paid job in NZ

Currently working (last 7 days)
- 42% had worked in the last 7 days
  - Includes full time and part time
  - Includes unpaid work in family business or farm
Who was more likely to currently be working?
Key factors associated with current employment

Who was significantly more likely to be in employment?

- Those who did not have a disability
- Those who arrived in NZ aged between ages of 13-19
- Men
- Those who could speak English well or very well
Relationship between employment & other domains

Those in employment were more likely to:

- Own their house
  - 27% compared to 11%

- Speak English well or very well
  - 86% compared to 60%

- Rate their health as excellent or very good
  - 65% compared to 40%

- Have friends from outside their community
  - 93% compared to 77%
Key facilitators to employment

• Attitude
  • I walked around asking for a job. I asked many businesses.
  • You need to have a, you know, positive attitude...Like you know, I cannot stay on the benefit all my life

• English Ability
  • My English is too little. I can only do a job that nobody wants.

• Skills & NZ Qualifications
  • So you need to be well informed about, knowing what the job market offers. Having the right skills that suits the job market
Key facilitators to employment

- NZ cultural knowledge
  - *I have been quite lucky just because I have been brought up in New Zealand, so I am very much, I don’t want to say westernised, but I understand how it [the labour market] works*

- Work experience
  - *If you interview ten people and one has [New Zealand] experience, who are you going to pick? The one with work experience, if they are [the] same.*
Key facilitators to employment

• Community networks
  - So my first job was through my cousin, like him explaining for us and everything and actually driving us there, because he had a car...

• Structural factors
  - Economy
  - Discrimination

• Personal Factors
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Health
What is Government doing to Improve resettlement outcomes?
New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy

- Whole of government approach to improving refugee resettlement outcomes
- Outcomes framework
- Actions
  - Pre-arrival orientation
  - Comprehensive Resettlement Plans
Conclusion

- The news is not great
  - The challenge of youth unemployment

- Importance of employment to Integration
  - Former refugees themselves consider it important to developing a sense of belonging

- But….other aspects of integration also important
  - Participation
  - Role of care-giving

- The road ahead...
  - What can we learn about improving employment outcomes?
Quota Refugees Ten Years On
Programme of Research

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