



# Improving Resettlement Outcomes

What can we learn from men from refugee backgrounds?

Report delivered to Lotteries Community Sector Research Fund

Kiri West-McGruer, Jean-Pierre Karabadogomba,  
Gatluak Chaol, Jeffrey Pau, Selvahamar Sivanathan,  
Abann Yor, Louise Humpage and Jay Marlowe

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	0
<b>Executive Summary</b>	1
<b>Introduction</b>	2
<b>Project Overview</b>	3
<b>Research Design and Background</b>	4
<b>STUDY FINDINGS</b>	7
<b>PART ONE: Challenges Men Face When Settling in AOTEAROA New Zealand</b>	7
Shifting gender roles	
Securing meaningful work	
Changing division of labour and power	
Family separation and loss of community	
Parenting	
Summary	
<b>PART TWO: Successful Negotiation of Challenges and Identifying Support</b>	15
Making a successful transition	
Creating and sustaining community	
Facilitating independence	
<b>PRACTICE AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS</b>	19
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	21
<b>REFERENCES</b>	22

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Most importantly, we would like to thank the 40 men who took part in the research and shared their stories with us, as well as the further men who took part in community consultations.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The experience of refugee backgrounds in the resettlement requires that people adapt to new social realities. This process may include adjustments and renegotiations regarding parenting, gender roles, cultural norms, laws and regulations, what constitutes community and many other aspects of life. This is particularly the case for men from refugee backgrounds as they often simultaneously try to maintain important cultural traditions, financially support their families and try to craft a meaningful existence in Aotearoa New Zealand.

However, men's voices are relatively absent in the associated literature. This study responds to this gap by interviewing 40 men from refugee backgrounds about how they have attempted to live healthy, stable, and resilient lives in Aotearoa New Zealand. In particular, the study asked questions relating to: (1) what challenges they experience; (2) how they negotiate such challenges; and (3) what supports they need or could identify.

The findings indicate that men face a range of challenges that include renegotiating gender roles, adjusting to new intergenerational tensions, securing meaningful employment, family separation and balancing maintaining one's culture whilst also integrating into Aotearoa New Zealand society. Yet the participants describe, in rich detail, the various pathways by which they have responded to such challenges. Some note how they have embraced new opportunities, such as being an active and involved father, that would not have otherwise been open to them. They speak of the need for community support and the various ways they have adapted and been flexible to create a meaningful place in Aotearoa New Zealand society. While participants noted that settlement was a challenging experience, they also acknowledged the opportunities afforded within it.

These findings signal important policy and practice implications about ensuring men have meaningful and sustainable employment opportunities, building relationships between community leaders and authorities, further assisting men to navigate Aotearoa New Zealand systems and supporting men to work through the challenges of adapting to a new social reality. Importantly, this report highlights the need for the refugee support sector to be adequately resourced (particularly given the annual refugee quota increased to 1000 in 2018 and will increase further to 1500 in 2020) and that people from refugee backgrounds are able to meaningfully inform what these services look like. Men's voices are crucial in this process. The research also highlights the need for stronger relationships with government and non-government organisations that foster a climate of trust. When such collaboration is achieved, it will help to proactively respond to problems, pre-empt concerns from happening and more effectively resolve issues when concerns arise.

This project is unique as the Auckland Resettled Community Coalition conceptualised, developed and delivered the research and resettled community researchers conducted the study. The Centre for Community Research and Evaluation at the University of Auckland was a partner in the study by building capacity within resettled communities and ensuring the data collected was of high quality and rigorously analysed. The study received ethics approval from the New Zealand Ethics Committee and the research reported back to ARCC member communities for feedback, which has been incorporated into this report.

# INTRODUCTION

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The 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees defines a 'refugee' as a person who has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular group or political opinion. The United High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2017) notes that today we have the highest number of forced migrants since World War II, eclipsing 65 million people. Aotearoa New Zealand plays an important part in responding to this global crisis through the various pathways that allow forced migrants to resettle permanently in this country. It has resettled refugees since welcoming Polish children during World War II and has maintained a formal resettlement programme since 1987. Since this time, the country has settled more than 30,000 refugees (Beaglehole, 2013).

Majority of refugee's backgrounds share similarities in that they did not choose to migrate but instead were forced to leave their homes and loved ones, often without the documents that attest to who they are or what qualifications they have. They may have also experienced significant trauma and/or spent several years in a refugee camp awaiting their status determination. Alongside these adversities, beginning a new life in Aotearoa New Zealand involves making significant adaptations to how they live their daily lives, with many facing problems accessing sufficient health, education and employment services and with family and social functioning often inhibited by continued separation from family members (Deng & Marlowe, 2013; Lewig, Arney, & Salveron, 2010; Valtonen, 2008). However, refugees are diverse in terms of nationality, ethnic origin, age, education, level of (dis)ability and religion. It is important to acknowledge this because the international research literature suggests that resettlement outcomes can differ depending on ethnicity, cultural background and gender (Betancourt et al., 2015; Bevelander & Pendakur, 2014; Ellis et al., 2010; Gerritsen et al., 2005; Mayhew et al., 2015; O'Donovana & Sheikha, 2014; Wilkinson, 2002, 2008).

Most refugees come to Aotearoa New Zealand through its 'quota programme'. Under this quota, refugees are granted permanent residence on arrival, with the opportunity to apply for citizenship after five years. Each intake completes a six-week orientation programme at the Mangere Refugee Reception Centre in Auckland before being placed in the community. At the time of writing, there are a number of refugee settlement centres: Auckland, Wellington, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Nelson, Dunedin and most recently, Invercargill. The Government increased the quota from 750 to 1000 people in 2018 and will take this number to 1500 people in 2020. In addition to Quota Refugees, a small number of asylum claims are received each year (known as Convention Refugees). Aotearoa New Zealand is signatory to the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol (see [www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org)). Other people share similar experiences and needs with those officially recognised as refugees but arrive under family reunification and other migration categories.

The [Auckland Resettled Community Coalition](#) (ARCC) is a non-government organisation that acts as an umbrella organisation for 22-member organisations from 16 diverse ethnic backgrounds that each support former refugee communities to resettle in Auckland. In the 12 years since ARCC was established, it has come to realise the importance of understanding the needs of men from refugee backgrounds, since many services target children, women and youth but the specific needs of male refugee backgrounds often remain unmet – or worse, such men are framed as 'problems' (for example, as unemployed or violent). In that the refugee resettlement literature, both in Aotearoa New Zealand and elsewhere, has also tended to place a priority on children, women, or youth, it is difficult to gain knowledge about how adult male newcomer may best be assisted to positive resettlement outcomes without conducting new empirical research in this area. This study attempts to shed further light on the experiences of men from refugee backgrounds to understand not only the barriers and challenges of their settlement experience but also the strengths, possibilities and hope that arise from it.

# PROJECT OVERVIEW

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While studies have focused on the experiences of refugee background women (De Souza, 2012; Edward, 2001; McMichael & Manderson, 2004; McPherson, 2010; Pittaway, 1991; Tomlinson, 2010), there has been remarkably little research that has focused specifically on men from refugee backgrounds. However, what research there is finds negative resettlement outcomes for men regarding high levels of unemployment and under-employment (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006; Forum, 2012; O'Donovan & Sheikh, 2014), family fragmentation (Deng & Marlowe, 2013; Deng & Pienaar, 2011; Lewig et al., 2010; Renzaho, McCabe, & Sainsbury, 2011) and the renegotiation of masculine identities (Marlowe, 2012).

Instead of framing these men as 'problems', this project reconceptualised refugee background men as a valuable resource in improving resettlement and integration outcomes for resettled families more broadly. The research project allowed the research participants an opportunity to tell their story, reflecting on both the challenges to and opportunities for successful family functioning and resettlement in an Aotearoa New Zealand context. It also provided a chance for the participants and other men in their communities to learn about successful strategies from each other, rather than being told by service providers what they 'should' be doing, and to pass this knowledge onto their children.

The study asks:

## **What can men from refugee backgrounds tell us about the best ways to encourage healthy, stable, and resilient lives in Aotearoa New Zealand?**

To address this question, the study had three primary objectives:

1. To understand the challenges men from refugee backgrounds face when settling in Aotearoa New Zealand. In particular:
  - How does settlement in Aotearoa New Zealand challenge traditional gender norms and family roles and responsibilities?
  - How has the refugee experience (for instance, living in a refugee camp) required certain strategies or skills that may no longer be appropriate or highly effective for successful family functioning (loving, respectful relationships and communication) and thus resettlement in the Aotearoa New Zealand context?
  - How does family separation (due to some family members remaining overseas or marriage breakup) impact traditional gender/parenting roles and make positive family functioning and resettlement more difficult?
  - How do intergenerational differences in experience and acculturation affect family functioning and resettlement?
  - How does having to adapt to a new cultural context and having to negotiate past practices and histories with the present relate to meaningful settlement experiences and acculturation pathways?
2. To understand how men successfully negotiate these challenges. For instance:
  - What strategies and skills learned through 'refugee' or acculturation experiences (such as resilience in the face of adversity or survival tactics) can be translated into the Aotearoa New Zealand context?
  - Are there particular strategies or skills that promote successful family functioning, acculturation and resettlement that can be learned by and encouraged among other refugee men?
  - What contextual factors (such as services available or ability to access employment) have already inhibited or encouraged successful negotiation of challenges?

- What types of support do men believe would assist them to better negotiate such challenges?
3. To understand how similarities and differences amongst refugee background men may influence the successful negotiation of the challenges they face in resettlement:
- How do demographic variables (such as ethnic/cultural background, religion, education, linguistic background and age) result in similarities and differences in the challenges the men face, particularly in regard to parenting/family relationships and ability to acculturate?
  - How do the same demographic variables shape their responses and ability to overcome these challenges?
  - How do demographic variables require differing kinds of support for men resettling in New Zealand?

The focus of this report, however, is largely on the first two questions since there were remarkably few differences between varied types of men; indeed, it became evident that the 'refugee experience' was relatively similar across different groups.

## RESEARCH DESIGN AND BACKGROUND

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This project emerged from and involved resettled communities in four key ways:

**First**, ARCC initiated and managed this project. The ARCC Governance Board identified research as an area of focus to enable it to meet its strategic goals by being a more responsive organisation. The project aimed to build specific research management skills amongst ARCC staff and research skills within member communities.

**Second**, four refugee background men were paid to both train in research skills and to conduct research interviews conducted interviews. Each community researcher was from one of the 10 main ethnic groups represented by ARCC (specifically the researchers came from Burundi, Southern Sudan, Myanmar and Sri Lanka), were respected within their ethnic community and had a high standard of written and spoken English. These researchers were able to converse in at least one of the languages spoken by the 10 ethnic groups. The men were supported by Abann K. A Yor, General Manager of ARCC, who managed the research project.

All four men developed their research knowledge and skills by collaboratively working with academics from the University of Auckland:

- Associate Professor Jay Marlowe delivered research workshops to the ARCC research assistants as a form of capacity building. He did so under the auspices of [the Centre of Community Research and Evaluation](#) (CCRE) at the University of Auckland, which is led by Professor Christa Fouche and which provides research and evaluation mentoring to support research initiatives within the community sector.
- Associate Professor Louise Humpage, an ARCC governance board member, supported Abann Yor in his research manager role.
- Kiri West-McGruer, a PhD student, was employed to analyse data and draft this report.

The collaboration with CCRE began with the researchers participating in a series of workshops covering how to design a research project, ethics, interviewing, developing the interview schedule, recruitment and data analysis. At the end of the project, the researchers also evaluated what skills had been developed and how these might be used to benefit their communities or careers. The study received ethics approval from the [New Zealand Ethics Committee](#).

**Third**, the data analysis workshop was used to collaboratively ensure that the key themes identified by the report writer resonated with the common narratives the community researchers felt they had

heard across their interviews and reflected their own knowledge of the humanitarian journey and resettlement experience. This process also allowed checking for consistency around the emerging analysis from the rich data provided in the transcripts collected from the four researchers.

Fourth, the research was reported back to ARCC member communities via three community consultations in West Auckland, Central Auckland and South Auckland in September and October 2018. The aim was to give opportunity to ARCC member organisations and research participants to reflect on outcomes and issues that were not fully covered in the research finding. Feedback from these consultations has been incorporated into this report.

## Recruitment

In total, 40 interviews were completed in Auckland across the period November 2017 to May 2018 with men from refugee backgrounds. Each participant had to be over 18 years of age, identify with one of the 10 main national groups represented by ARCC member groups and have lived in Auckland for at least one year.

Despite ARCC's wide networks within resettled communities, recruitment proved harder than expected for four main reasons:

- Many potential participants felt they could not take part because the interview had to be largely completed in the English language. Although the researchers had been aware this might be an issue, financial and logistical constraints prohibited the use of paid interpreters during the interviews or paid translators to translate interview transcripts for what would be anticipated would be up to 10 different languages.
- While researchers were usually matched with participants from their own national group, ensuring the involvement of a wider number of national groups than the four the researchers represented, and the practicalities of coordinating schedules meant that the researchers also recruited and interviewed participants from national groups other than their own. However, it was sometimes difficult to build trust and rapport sufficiently when working across cultures and languages, meaning some potential participants were lost.
- The research manager, who is the General Manager of ARCC, was very careful not to use his position to encourage community members to take part because ethical recruitment processes require that participation be voluntary, and some people may have wished to please him or felt there was no choice involved if he approached them. This meant the community researchers often had to engage with people with whom Abann Yor had a relationship, but they did not, again slowing the building of trust and rapport.
- The researchers were new to research and often felt uncomfortable in approaching people they did not know (or knew well!) to take part and it is possible some may not have explained the research clearly enough to entice participants to be involved.

Nonetheless, with 40 interviews we found that there we had reached a 'saturation' point, in the sense that many of the same themes were emerging in the interview data, making the sample size appropriate in this case.

## Life-history interviews

The community researchers used qualitative life-history methods to discuss participants' experiences through a digitally recorded interview that covered three significant time periods (before migration, in transit and resettlement in Aotearoa New Zealand). Research shows that the 'past' and 'present' are not always distinguishable for refugees (Humpage, 2009), so current resettlement experiences are likely impacted by factors in their past life (such as civil war, family fragmentation and living in a refugee camp). The literature further identifies life-history interview methods as an excellent way of eliciting the type of information sought, since participants are offered an opportunity to tell their own story and the researcher is challenged to understand an individual's current attitudes and behaviours

as potentially influenced by decisions made or experiences at another time and in another place (Ghorashi, 2008). Life-history interviews also allow participants a high level of agency in deciding the kinds of experiences discussed which is extremely important in collaborative, community-based research such as this project.

The life-history interviews generally lasted between 45 and 180 minutes. Professional transcribers familiar with transcription protocols transcribed interview data and the community researcher who conducted the interview then checked each transcript. Given the community-based nature of the project, the four stories of the community researchers were recorded so each could gain practice in interviewing and to pilot the interview schedule. As each of the four community researchers met the eligibility requirements of the study, these interviews were included in the study.

## Demographic information

**Table 1: Demographic characteristics of participants (n=40)**

Number of years in NZ		Age		Employment status	
0-5	11	20-29	10	Full time work	23
6-10	10	30-39	11	Part-time work	4
11-15	10	40-49	12	Seeking work	10
16-21	9	50-59	5	Student/retired	3
		60+	2		
Religion		Area of origin		Relationship status	
Christian	25	SE Asia	20	Married	26
Muslim	10	Africa	18	De facto	2
Hindu	5	Middle East	2	Divorced	2
				Single	10

In summary, the majority of participants had been in Aotearoa New Zealand for less than 15 years (26 were New Zealand Citizens and 14 were Permanent Residents). The majority were of working-age and in some kind of employment. Most were also married, with 27 having children (around half of which had been born in Aotearoa New Zealand). All 40 of the participants identified themselves as belonging to a faith community, with the majority being Christian. The largest number of participants came from Myanmar (11), Burundi (8) and Sri Lanka (7). Table 1 categorises participants by region since there were too few participants from any one country of origin to analyse for demographic differences. Around equal numbers were from South-East Asian countries and African countries, with only two from Middle Eastern countries. Table 2 lists the specific countries of origin that participants named.

**Table 2: Countries of origin of participants (n=40)**

Country of origin	Number of participants
Sri Lanka	7
South Sudan	3
Myanmar	11
Cameroon	1
Burundi	8
Ethiopia	1
Syria	1
Sudan	1
Somalia	2
Pakistan	1
Iraq	1
Eritrea	1
Democratic Republic of the Congo	2

# STUDY FINDINGS

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The study findings are broken into two key sections. Part One focuses on the challenges that men faced while settling in Aotearoa New Zealand. Part Two takes a strengths perspective to identify how men navigate and negotiate these challenges to lead lives that are more meaningful for themselves and their families. Each section uses participant quotes to illustrate key themes that emerged from the transcripts. These are indented and placed in italics. Participant names are not used to protect confidentiality, but we do note the country of origin for each participant and their age range in ten-year intervals (20s, 30s, 40s, etc). Where possible, we have included any differences observed based on demographic differences and feedback from the community consultations.

## PART ONE: CHALLENGES MEN FACE WHEN SETTLING IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

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This section identifies the varied challenges men from refugee backgrounds face as they settle in Aotearoa New Zealand.

### Shifting gender roles

When asked to describe a typical day in their country of origin, with a specific focus on the roles undertaken by men and women in their communities, the single most significant theme to emerge was the gendered division of labour. Irrespective of countries of origin, all of the participants highlighted a clear differentiation between the roles traditionally undertaken by men and those by women in their communities. Perhaps unsurprisingly, participants generally identified men as the 'providers' in each family and women as 'housewives'.

More unexpected was that the participants were able to very clearly define how they understood the responsibilities of their wives, mothers and other women in their communities of origin but when describing the role of husbands, fathers and men, there was less clarity. The participants identified three key day-to-day duties for women, which were childrearing, cooking and maintaining the household.

*Yeah, everything is good; and, the woman should stay home and look after the kids, look after the house. That's why we call our women, house-woman. (Eritrea, 50s)*

*We have specific tasks carried out by women. They look after the children, and make sure what the men provide are shared properly within the family; and also, they are the ones that make sure the family is well known; that is a warm and welcoming. (Burundi, 40s)*

*Women usually do the housework; they look after the children, and the role for men, usually is to be the breadwinner. To go out to work, and bring the money back home; and the women are considered the minister of interior. (Somalia, 20s)*

There was some slight variation; for example, some of the participants who had lived in rural areas and farming communities noted that women were responsible for water collection and two of the participants focused specifically on the cultural rituals associated with weddings to distinguish between the roles of men and women.

On the other hand, participants were less able to clearly define men's roles as a 'provider'; there was little embellishment as to what 'providing' entails. For instance, one participant described his role in the following way:

*The man is the backbone of the whole family, to support and to feed, and to lead. (Myanmar, 40s)*

This quote evokes notions of strength, security and leadership as fundamental to the man's role in this particular participant's country of origin but these same qualities were also reflected in the responses of other participants. For half of the men, financial security was the paramount concern. This was demonstrated in frequent use of the term 'breadwinner' to describe the male role and in references to money and financial responsibility. Other participants referred to themselves as the 'king' or 'head' of the family, taking on board the responsibilities of decision-making:

*Man is identified as a breadwinner, a provider, a protector for the family. He is the king of the family, and he is the one to direct the family. (Burundi, 40s)*

*My role, I'm a father of two children. Therefore, father is the main breadwinner role in the family. I was working and my wife was working; but I'm the main person to ensure the safety of the family; safety and security. (Sri Lanka, 50s)*

The use of the term 'king' to describe the role of the man within the family was discussed further with the community researchers in the data analysis workshop. They interpreted the notion of a 'king' as being a person who is powerful, a protector and as someone who has subjects. This resonates with the notions of leadership and strength through culturally-constructed understandings of masculinity.

The participants presented many reasons why there was such distinctive role differentiation. One participant referenced 'tradition' and the fact that it had always been that way:

*Yeah, because it's part of our culture. We grow, and we follow our mothers; my grandmother did these things, and my mother and father do these things. So, this is very natural for us to grow with it. (Sudan, 40s)*

Nevertheless, for those participants who did rationalise role differentiation, the majority (8) referred to the differing abilities of men and women. This largely centred on the idea that men were physically stronger, and fitter so could take on board tasks such as clearing fields and herding cattle – this was particularly the case for those who lived in farming communities.

When discussing traditional gender roles in their countries of origin, the participants often talked about their experiences in relation to their current situation in Aotearoa New Zealand. Further, most of the discussion centred on the family dynamic and what roles people took on to support the family, as opposed to any real discussion about men and women generally or outside of the home.

*Men in Burundi do lots of things, because he's a king, we call them a king, but when we came over here, there was no more king; the women and the men work together. So, those two things are different. Back home, men go to work and make the money, comes back home, and he gives the money to the family to do some shopping, but here no, it's different. (Burundi, 30s)*

Participants described the gender roles in Aotearoa New Zealand as 'equal' and many were satisfied with the greater sense of equality:

*Yeah, as I said before, New Zealand is a mixed cultural country. We help each other to do many things, which back in my country, we can't do; I can cook, I wash the dishes, I can clean the house; so, those kinds of duties for women. Since I've been in New Zealand, I've learnt, no jobs for just men, no jobs for just women; so, all jobs are equal. The role for men is to do everything which men and women can do; can help women. (Burundi, 30s)*

*In my culture, men must work to support the family, and women must be housewives; look after the kids. This is good, but even the Kiwi way, for a woman to have a job, it's good and I like it, because even the women sharing jobs, for more money, is good; and, the men to share at home; your wife is cooking, and you have the kids showered, and put them to bed. If you share, and life is good. So, my culture, and the Kiwi culture, is good. (Eritrea, 50s)*

The last quote highlights the negotiation of roles that men often face with their partners, children, workplace and Aotearoa New Zealand society as a whole. This was a central theme across most of the interviews as the men adapted to new social constructed meanings about men's roles and practices.

However, age tended to influence responses. While participants aged between 20-39 did talk about how the responsibilities held by men and women were different in Aotearoa New Zealand, they did not dwell on this in the same way that men aged 40 and above did. This could be because the men in the younger age bracket (particularly those aged 20-29) were often single with no children. Further, a majority of the men in the 20-29 age bracket arrived in New Zealand when they were still school aged which generally meant that they had better experiences of acculturation and language acquisition than those men who arrived later in life.

Men who took part in community consultations provided some further context, highlighting that in some cultures men do not cook, clean or even enter the kitchen because it is seen as taboo – not least because it constrains the ability of the woman to be the manager of the house. Thus, refugee background men should not simply be expected to change and 'get over' what might be considered sexist views here, but be supported as they negotiate some extremely challenging adaptations to their roles and, indeed, their own construction of self as they settle in Aotearoa New Zealand. There was also a suggestion that families should be informed about and prepared for these anticipated gender role shifts before they even arrive in the country.

## Securing meaningful work

Given the initial emphasis on the man's responsibility to provide financially for his family, it is unsurprising that the participants often indicated that access to employment is a challenge:

*It is hard to know, because you find nowadays, everybody has to work. You don't do what you want; you have to do what you need. For instance, if you go to school to learn accounting, most of the time you expect to have an accounting role, but some people are lucky, and others are not lucky; so, you have to do what is available... (Burundi, 40s)*

*The support provider needs to identify what supports are needed; language support, school support, financial support, or employment support. Most of the time, government, Work and Income, give money, and have training courses, but hardly ever consider what skills the person has, and what kind of job he can do, here in New Zealand. Lots of people from my country come to New Zealand, and have very good skills, but because of the lack of English, they can't get a decent job; they're stuck with the odd jobs. The language barrier here is the big thing for men with refugee backgrounds, especially from my country. To pick up the language, is a big challenge. (Myanmar, 40s)*

There were many examples supporting these comments throughout the participant data. The importance yet difficulty of finding meaningful work is well supported in the refugee related literature (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Correa-Velez, Barnett, & Gifford, 2015; Lundborg, 2013; Ministry of Business, 2012). Here we want to stress that the lack of sufficient and meaningful work in Aotearoa New Zealand not only has financial repercussions for resettled families but also challenges the masculine identities of men from refugee backgrounds.

When discussing the challenges associated with employment, many of the participants identified language as a key barrier but participants from African countries were more likely to also report experiences of racism and discrimination as barriers to securing meaningful work. Yet the same group were more likely to report a sense of satisfaction in the workplace once employed. It is also worthwhile noting that the community consultations highlighted that racism and discrimination are

more widespread than reported during interviews and amongst groups other than African men. For instance, a consultation group member said:

*I was once a pizza delivery man. There were moments where I had to deliver a pizza and upon seeing me with Middle Eastern face, the person who made the order yelled at me, asking me to go back or he would call the police for trespassing charges although he knew he made the order. There are prejudices out there against persons from refugee backgrounds. The question would be how we can address such prejudices, so they don't follow our children and grandchildren. I have no home other than New Zealand. (Iraq, 30s)*

As this man points out, racism is common, so we need to find ways to overcome this problem because refugees cannot return home if they find such challenges too difficult. For the most part, men in the consultation reported that Aotearoa New Zealand is a safe and peaceful place to live but they all wanted to feel like they *belonged* and a key way to do this was through secure, meaningful work. As this following quote suggests, this means supporting refugees to find work as quickly as possible:

*I always ask myself, if I was denied a simple cleaning job because I didn't have a New Zealand experience as new arrival, how difficult is it for newly arrived skilled immigrants and qualified refugee communities to find jobs in their disciplines in New Zealand? I think refugees need special consideration in job market. (Democratic Republic of Congo, 30s)*

Such special consideration includes reducing the financial sanctions that those who receive a Work and Income benefit face while looking for work:

*I come to New Zealand four and half years ago and I just got my first job with [name of organisation] last month. Job search is back-breaking, having a qualification and experience is one thing and the name on that qualification is another thing. I can recall that Work and Income trained me on the techniques of job search, but my CV and my name play their roles of rejection whenever I applied for a job. Sometimes, Work and Income rushes you to find any job without offering personal development courses. Work and Income should scrap out this idea of reducing or cutting benefits of those families that are not finding a job quicker it bears big burden on them. It is not their fault in most cases for not finding a job. On the contrary, would be a great idea to put a policy in to increase financial support for the working families so that they maintain their employment. (Sudan, 40s)*

This last point highlights that gaining employment (any employment, even if only part-time, insecure work) risks losing other financial assistance from the Government:

*Once in employment, the family benefits get stopped, house rent goes up and you cannot pay all the bills with earnings from minimum wage while providing for a large family. People who fall in this terrible situation have no choice but to quit work because the burden of having little job or low pay job is higher than the burden of staying unemployed. The system doesn't play it right. If the Work and Income introduce a policy that supports giving incentives to working families for sticking to their jobs, you can see how serious anyone over 18 years of age in a household would try by any means necessary to secure employment. (Myanmar, 50s)*

The latter comment suggests that the current Working for Families package, which assists low-income families, is not working effectively for refugee background families.

## Changing division of labour and power

Limited employment opportunities for men, and the need for women to work in Aotearoa New Zealand for financial reasons, were often given as a reason why men have had to start taking on some

of the responsibilities which would typically be understood as 'women's work' in their countries of origin.

*Yeah, because we have to do what we need here, because the wife also goes to work; she hasn't time. Therefore, we need to cook here, we need to clean house; and mostly lawn mowing is a man's job. Yeah, we are doing lawn mowing; the extra job here. (Sri Lanka, 50s)*

*Yes, like you said, men don't cook in the kitchen, and they don't do the cleaning, but here you are expected to, because over here you cannot live on one income; so, both people have to go out to work, and most people are tired. So, the only option is for them to take turns with the cleaning, cooking and looking after the children, otherwise it becomes too tough on the people. (Somalia, 20s)*

*Yes, especially here. In Burundi, you find that women, most of the time don't have much involvement in providing for the family; but, here I find you equally have to work hard to ensure the family is financially stable, and work for it, then we are able to get what we want. You find that women here, have to work hard for the family... especially looking after the children; back home, looking after the children is the main responsibility of the women. Here, because the wife also has to go to work, and depending on the job they have; so, you have to support looking after the children. Picking them up, or dropping them off at school; so, you find that is not the only the responsibility for the wife, but also men have to be involved equally. (Burundi, 40s)*

*Normally, the men in my country, are doing so many tasks to look after the family. Working, providing everything for the family; and, doing the daily job to assist his family in all needs... Women are doing the same as men in our country; they're working hard for the family, mainly looking after children. (Burundi, 70s)*

Some of the participants felt that the resettlement experience diminished their own power in the household and place in society, while others saw it more as a shift in (as opposed to diminishment of) power.

*In the New Zealand culture, I found [that men and women], their role is much different here, because women have opportunity, access, needs; they can go and get a job, they employ women easily. Therefore, I found the breadwinner role in our country is a man, but here, women in the main role in the family; economically and psychologically, and everything. I found that if a man is lost in our country; then, it is difficult for women to take that role, and look after the family and everything. Here, there's more opportunities for women; if anything happens to a man, the women can continue, and they have welfare facilities. They can easily look after the family. (Sri Lanka, 50s)*

*African women, if they are not mature, if they are not educated; I don't think it's good to have the money in their hands. (Eritrea, 50s)*

*Here in New Zealand, the Government talk about women and their freedom and they've got a lot of support and help; but, they use that kind of support as a weapon, or a shield, or something that they can use to control the husband. (Myanmar, 40s)*

The quotes above highlight a concern that came through strongly in the interview data and was reinforced during the data analysis and community consultation workshops, namely, financial control in familial (and, more specifically, marital) relationships. In particular, the financial support coming from the Government in the form of benefits and family-focused tax credits altered the power dynamics in families in a way that the participants were not expecting. One example was a sense of confusion and even frustration with Work and Income's policy around the requirement for payments to be made in to individual bank accounts, resulting in women having control over their own finances.

Some men perceived this as not only diminishing the male's traditional role as financial provider but also as increasing the risk of family break-up because it gave women and children an independent income that meant they could survive, if necessary, without a male breadwinner. As a community consultation member pointed out:

*Man's resettlement challenges, be it lack of secure and meaningful employment or discrimination, have huge impact on the family. While some gender roles change by default, disagreements brought about by change of gender roles be a threat to the family unit if not handled with care. (South Sudan, 40s)*

One of the community consultation members who originated from Africa suggested that these issues should be discussed with Immigration New Zealand and Work and Income so that there is a better understanding of the cultural challenges many families face if they believe that dividing money between different family members will eventually divide the family. He described how his wife managed all the family finances to avoid conflict over money and this helped build trust between them. But, for many families, money did become a source of conflict and risked family disintegration.

Although there were relatively few differences amongst the participants based on demographic variables, country of origin did appear to influence men's responses around this theme of changing division of labour and power. While nearly all of the men reported a shift in the responsibilities they now had as fathers, husbands, sons and brothers, participants from South East Asian countries were more likely to add that these new roles meant they spent more time with their children than they could have in their countries of origin. Additionally, these participants were also more likely to reflect positively on the new roles that women take in broader family decision making. In contrast, participants from African countries tended to report that they had less time with their children - because the cost of living in Aotearoa New Zealand is so high, they are required to work long hours to support their families, where previously they would have had more time available to them to spend with their children in their countries of origin or in the refugee camps and country of asylum they lived in prior to arriving in Aotearoa New Zealand. Further, these participants also expressed higher levels of dissatisfaction with the shift in power dynamics between men and women, especially with regards to the new levels of financial freedom afforded to women in Aotearoa New Zealand.

### Family separation and loss of community

Family separation presented as a further significant source of concern for many of the participants but it is important to stress that 'family' was understood more broadly than 'nuclear family'. There was only one participant who had experienced separation from their immediate family through the resettlement process. For this participant, this initial separation was necessary to ensure the safety and security of his family but his story reflected many of the themes raised earlier in this report. In particular, as part of his role as a father and husband, he was responsible for ensuring his family could stay safe. Normally this would mean staying with them to ensure their protection but adverse circumstances required adaptation; his insistence that the family leave South Sudan for Aotearoa New Zealand without him, despite their initial reluctance, still demonstrated his position as 'head of the family' and decision maker.

While the other participants did not necessarily experience separation of immediate family during the forced migration journey, many did have devastating stories of loss through the resettlement experience. Living in Aotearoa New Zealand meant a disruption of traditional family responsibilities for some participants. Taking care of elderly parents, for example, was a significant source of concern. One participant reflected on how, in his home community, his wife would have been expected to care for her parents as they aged. He went on to explain that they did successfully bring *his* mother to Aotearoa New Zealand, however, after a short time here she left:

*Yeah, she hasn't anyone to talk with her. We brought her here for work; then she stays alone. She hasn't any role here... Normally stay with the daughter, I'm her son; therefore, she doesn't like to stay here. (Sri Lanka, 50s)*

The quote above brings to light an important cultural norm regarding the presence of extended family in the day-to-day life of participants. We will revisit this later when discussing family responsibility around raising children. Some participants were concerned that a lack of community, which often acted as the eyes and ears of parents and might even be expected to discipline children if parents were not present, had negative impacts on children, with gang membership and laziness noted as potential outcomes. The following quotes demonstrate this shift:

*Back home... If a child misbehaved on the street, or two children fight, the Somali person just walking in the street, would tell them to stop, and they would probably hit them... and when you take them to their parents, the parents will say thank you for disciplining them... Because it's the responsibility of the whole town to raise the child. (Somalia, 20s)*

*... some children, when you don't keep your eyes on them, they do whatever they want and you're not allowed to give them a good correction, in New Zealand, because you have to follow the rules; you have to be careful of what you do... because, as you know, when they see that they are in a peaceful country like this, they think everything is automatic, and when you have your life experience for example, and you remember your previous life in Africa, and how you were looking for money and everything, you find that over here there are big changes. (Burundi, 50s)*

Others felt a lack of community engagement required them to take on additional roles to support their children that they would not have considered in their country of origin:

*In New Zealand we have a nuclear family; we need to spend more time here with children. In our home country, extended family members help... I found here, we spend more time with children... we have to fulfil all their needs; loving and caring needs. (Sri Lanka, 50s)*

*Looking after the baby, I would say it's not because of a responsibility, because of love... I just personally want to be with my boy and to play with him. That's the kind of thing, normally men don't do back in our country. (Myanmar, 40s)*

As you can see from above, these latter two men focused on the nurturing children, with the second highlighting how this new expectation could be a positive shift. Other participants, however, did not express the same sentiment about spending quality time with children; instead, although they said they were expected to look after children, they described cooking, changing nappies and other tasks that indicated they were often physically present but were not necessarily actively engaged with their children. But overall, whilst these changes could be seen as challenges, participants were also clear that they opened opportunities for new relationships with their children. They can thus be seen as an example of the flexibility and adaptability that characterised those who had more easily adjusted to resettlement life in Aotearoa New Zealand.

## Parenting

When asked to reflect on whether there were any particular responsibilities which children had in their countries of origin versus here in Aotearoa New Zealand, the responses varied. About half of the participants had children prior to resettlement but only two became fathers in their countries of origin (the rest of their children were born in forced migration contexts) and those children were very young when the decision to leave was made. With this in mind, the men did not spend much time talking about the roles and responsibilities of children prior to resettlement, beyond reference to helping with farm work and occasionally fetching water. What they did say, however, is that children brought up

here lacked knowledge and awareness of their luck or fortune to be raised without ongoing conflict around them.

*Yeah, sometimes their mother; we got more tension because the cultural conflict here. We have grown up in as different value system; the children are now growing up in a different value system. (Sri Lanka, 50s)*

*Here in New Zealand, it really doesn't matter if you don't want to do what your parents do, or what your parents say to you, you can argue back; or you can call the Police if you don't like your parents. (Myanmar, 40s)*

The participants here indicate that the cultural gap between parents and their children meant that the children being brought up in Aotearoa New Zealand lacked respect. Further, the participants did not feel empowered to change this, because they did not have the same abilities to discipline their children as they would have in their countries of origin. This challenge, however, was often outweighed by other things, such as access to quality education, particularly amongst participants with older children who could now attend tertiary institutions. One participant discussed how his children did not need to help with chores in Aotearoa New Zealand but instead were required to focus on their study:

*... we only expect, sometimes they cook on the university holidays; two-week break - they cook one to three days. Personally, I don't like to divide the rule. In some families, they push children, girls, for the cooking. Not me, we focus on the studies... Because I have two daughters, therefore I like this freedom; they can act their own here. Sometimes I feel in our community; they suppress the women under the cultural banner... Sometimes in our culture, they suppress women, which creates dependent mentality. Women [t]here, they expect a man to do everything for them. (Sri Lanka, 50s)*

Overall, there was little discussion on inter-generational conflict between parents and children amongst the participants. But one came to Aotearoa New Zealand as a young boy and he described how his engagement in school meant that he picked up English quicker than his parents, which introduced a new range of responsibilities for him as an interpreter for his parents:

*... because there's a reversal of roles; so, things that the parents would normally be doing, the children will have to do, like for example, if you take your kids to the parent/teacher interview at school, the parents would normally speak to the teacher, but here I would be expected to translate; so, if I get in trouble, I will translate the wrong things. It's good. Or for example, going to doctor visits, or appointments with the government agencies, things like that. (Somalia, 20s)*

This issue was reiterated by an older participant:

*That's the main struggle parents have: in Burundi children happy to obey parents; and also, it is like they don't have any right of what they do, or what they say, they have to follow the parents; but here, because society is open, they learn to know their rights, they know their freedom. So, you have to make sure you understand the difference of how we were raised, and the society here. Yeah, they have too many rights, but it up to you to balance those rights... (Burundi, 40s)*

As this quote suggests, some participants perceived that children had greater rights in Aotearoa New Zealand than they would have had in the countries of origin. This created some tensions when parents wished to maintain traditional cultural practices within the Aotearoa New Zealand social and legal context. In particular, some participants felt that the law currently favours women and children and subsequently disempowers men, making it difficult to uphold traditional cultural norms regarding the male breadwinner or head of family roles they had grown up with. Members of the community consultations indicated that they felt Oranga Tamariki involvement is not to protect the family unit but to divide the family even more (by highlighting the rights of the child). They did, however, believe it

would be useful to run workshops and training sessions to educate communities about when child discipline is considered child abuse, given that many refugee background families come from cultures where physical discipline is regarded as normal and even necessary. They also felt that enabling community elders/consultation to be part of discussions about domestic violence or child abuse cases would reduce the number of cases where children are uplifted or marriage ends in divorce.

Although the younger participants could not comment on how settling in to Aotearoa New Zealand necessitated a change in parenting style because they did not have children, they were able to reflect on their lived experiences as young people trying to manage cultural shifts when settling here. As noted, some had taken on responsibilities which many children their age would not have been required to undertake, for example translating for their parents. But they also reflected positively on how life in New Zealand as a young person is a life of freedom - particularly freedom from physical discipline at home and corporal punishment at school were frequently mentioned in the interviews of participants aged 20-29. In those aged over 30, it tended to be participants from South East Asian countries that emphasised that Aotearoa New Zealand provided an opportunity for children to just focus on their education and not take on other responsibilities, such as household chores. Only two participants from this group specifically discussed how they were pleased to be raising their daughters in Aotearoa New Zealand because they could stress this educational focus over household tasks and, more generally, they felt there was less oppression and discrimination towards women.

## Summary

The participants spoke passionately about their desire to keep family together and the pressures they feel to be breadwinners. When men found it difficult to find meaningful and secure work, this then directly challenged their sense of agency and self. It also required negotiating new family dynamics. Women found new roles and opportunities in Aotearoa New Zealand, while children experienced intergenerational acculturation pathways through everyday schooling that were not open to their parents. Whilst presenting significant challenges, the next section highlights that participants also reinforced that the opportunities that settlement in Aotearoa New Zealand provided and the various ways that they have worked towards pursuing their hopes and vision for themselves, family and community.

## **PART TWO: SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATION OF CHALLENGES AND IDENTIFYING SUPPORT**

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Part Two of this report focuses on what strategies and skills learned through the participants' experiences of forced migration can be translated into the Aotearoa New Zealand context. It also seeks to identify the supports that can assist in this process.

### Making a successful transition

As noted, gender role renegotiation was something all the men had experienced in Aotearoa New Zealand, particularly when managing parenting. However, this was not always a new experience, since it was not always possible in the forced migration context to maintain the traditional gender roles found in their country of origin as people were constantly on the move, living in refugee camps or separated from family. The male role as 'breadwinner', for example, is challenged in an environment where you have no right to work or where resources are so scarce that families rely on the whole family unit working together to provide for each other. Additionally, where men may have previously had very limited time to spend with their families and children, long periods spent in limbo meant they were with their family more often and therefore had more of a role to play in child rearing.

The research data suggests that men who had needed to adapt to the conditions in the refugee camp and other (generally urban) sites of displacement tended to be more open about renegotiating gender roles in Aotearoa New Zealand. Overall, they felt that these past experiences taught them resilience and encouraged a view that adaptability is important. One participant said:

*The things that I went through, in my past life; are the driving force that is driving me forward. My past is my strength. (South Sudan, 40s)*

Here he is not referring to gender roles in the country of origin but rather his past experiences in transit and living in a third country.

Other participants also framed the lack of the wider community supports they were used to in their country of origin as strengthening their relationships with their wives, particularly around decision-making and future planning. The quote below shows how one man shifted in terms of seeing himself as the sole decision maker in the family to being more open to discussion:

*You have to see that it is no longer the man's role; but, a role to consider that she has thoughts, she has feelings. To accept that we are all equal. Notice only that; I am a man, I have to be the provider, I have to be the protector, and yes... but, it is to accept that whatever she's thinking, it is too see that the family is well protected (Burundi, 40s)*

In these ways, many of the men had moved from being nostalgic about the past and instead were focused on new opportunities and new strengths that could be developed in resettlement.

## Creating and sustaining community

Creating a sense of community was particularly important for the men after arriving in Aotearoa New Zealand. Most participants identified the notion of community as something defined along ethno-national bases and as a key factor in their initial stages of resettlement. For many of the men, their first engagement with their country of origin community in Aotearoa New Zealand was through a church or temple. One participant noted that the first thing he did when arriving in Aotearoa New Zealand was to find a temple (Sri Lanka, 50s), while another noted that he felt successful in Aotearoa New Zealand because he was able to volunteer his time to help at his church (Burundi, 40s). Participating in sports teams and community centres were also considerable sites for community building, as were places of employment. Notably, younger participants (20-39) spoke more frequently about having diverse community groups such as sports teams as well as friends acquired at school and through tertiary education, whereas participants aged 40 and over referred to faith groups, people who arrived from the same countries and friends made at the refugee resettlement centre camp at Mangere as their primary communities.

Participants also defined 'family' in a broader and community-inclusive way than western norms of the 'nuclear' family. They used the term family to extended family, friends, neighbours and the broader community:

*Yeah. But family support from everyone in your family; the cultural Sudan families stick together, they will help each other as a family. If you have something happen to you, the support comes from the family... (Sudan, 40s)*

*Also, in Sudan, or in South Sudan, for that matter; your neighbour is your relative... If you have a problem, the neighbour is the one who knows; it's like your brother. (South Sudan, 40s)*

The quotes above reflect a narrative, which came through strongly in many of the interviews, about mutual responsibilities to and from the broader community which then re-created family-like

relationships. Participants relied on their neighbours and broader community as a major source of support.

There were two key ways that participants felt that they could rely on their neighbours. First, financial support was significant, not necessarily for day-to-day living, but certainly for cultural rituals and special events such as weddings, funerals and birthdays. Second, neighbours also offered a significant source of moral support. Given the conditions that the participants experienced, strong relationships with neighbours were significant for many participants.

*Friends; yeah, any help we can get from friends. Because, our neighbourhood sometimes helps us; our friends and neighbours. That's moral support from our community care, because every day we have some problem in the community; in war time, someone kill someone. We help each other, and every day we go to a funeral; in wartime, people die... (Sri Lanka, 50s)*

However, some participants expressed discomfort in approaching their Aotearoa New Zealand neighbours for assistance. As a result, faith communities and recreational groups became significant sites of support. We revisit this consideration in the discussion section of this report when considering skills and strategies for successful resettlement. They noted that there is a significant gap in support regarding conflict and problem resolution within families.

*In Sri Lanka, if there is any conflict, there are mediators; like my parents. So they are the mediators, and if there is any problem, they will identify you and they will rectify, because that's kind of their duty to look after the family. (Sri Lanka, 40s)*

In the absence of such community support mechanisms in Aotearoa New Zealand, participants sometimes articulated a sense of being unsure of how to conduct themselves in situations of conflict. This was particularly relevant when discussing problems arising with their spouse or around raising their kids and discipline. In these instances, participants tended to fall back on Aotearoa New Zealand laws around child protection and intimate partner violence as a guiding structure for their conduct:

*The rules in New Zealand are very clear, for everyone. So, I say to my wife, we stick with the rules; we are going to have a nice life, and we are going to be good citizens in this country. So, we avoid a lot of problems. A lot of families coming in go face to face with the rules here, because there's different rules; but, as I said to you, the six weeks in Mangere changed a lot of us, and until today and after 20 years of staying in New Zealand, you remember those days, because it takes you from life to life... Yeah, different journey... (Sudan, 40s)*

Although awareness of the laws in Aotearoa New Zealand is important, it is concerning that some participants believed there was no middle position between addressing a minor domestic dispute within the immediate family and calling the police, which they were aware could then pose a risk to family integrity (for instance, if children were present and Oranga Tamariki was called). Community consultation members felt the New Zealand Police should better acknowledge the role community elders can play in mediating within families before the situation escalates. They called for dialogue, through diversity workshops between the Police and the community, to improve understanding, including about how sometimes children may lie about what is happening without full knowledge of the consequences (such as being uplifted from their family and placed in a foster home if they say their parents are mistreating them). They also wished for more emphasis to be placed on encouraging elders to stay active in their communities to act as advisors and mediators.

Overall, participants suggested a wider definition of 'family' that incorporated community members and emphasised the important roles of elders and respected leaders can play in ensuring that their communities (generally defined along ethno-national lines) were functioning well. This leadership can help convey important messages to authorities and other groups in positions of power to create environments of understanding, conflict resolution and pathways to positive settlement outcomes.

## Facilitating independence

Another theme that emerged from the men's stories spoke to their capacity to show initiative and resilience. The scarcity of food and resources was a significant issue for the men while living in the refugee camps. The men noted that they lived week to week with limited rations as the primary food supply. The need to survive under adverse conditions meant that, in some cases, the participants had to be highly innovative to support their family. One participant in particular noted that he was not convinced that the rations provided would be enough to support his family, so he found ways to improve their situation:

*Even I started a small trade where I used to borrow money, and then buy onions and tomatoes, and all of that, to sell them. Sometimes, people would rob me out of them; they would take them. I would not give up, because the money that I get from them; that's where I support the family, because I'm acting like a father, and an older brother... So, I have to do my best to feed this family; and I go to school too. So, it was so hard. The things that I sell, I would pay them in the school and buy food. It was a big responsibility. (South Sudan, 40s)*

The entrepreneurial spirit reflected in the quote above has translated into some of the participants owning their own small businesses in AotearoaNew Zealand. While not a large number, it is significant that these men found ways to overcome adversity to support themselves and their families. This adaptability is important given many of the participants have had to retrain or learn new skills in order to be employable in the AotearoaNew Zealand context.

*According to my experience, when government or a support provider provides their support to men of refugee background, they need to support them to be successful and independent, as soon as possible, because the support is not going to be there always; so, that information needs to be made clear. We want to support you, but the support is to help you be successful in your new life, but this support is not for the rest of your life. (Myanmar, 40s)*

This comment highlights that, whilst support is very important, so too is the desire of the individual to be successful. It highlights that positive resettlement outcomes result not just from the agency of the individual or structural support but a combination of the two. When these are both functioning well, this creates a rich contexts for integration and a sense of belonging.

As noted earlier, many refugee background men found Work and Income's support in finding work inadequate, forcing them to take the situation into their own hands, as a participant in the community consultations indicated:

*I was accounts manager with several years of experience in Ethiopia. I made several attempts to find a job in financial industry after arriving to New Zealand, but I was between 'no NZ experience and overqualified'. I tried Work and Income to help me find an accounting job, but all in vain. When all attempts failed, I tried in my own ways to get NZ experience. I submitted many applications for volunteering work for any accounting job and one company positively responded. I worked for this agency for four months without pay and I had to drive from Mount Albert to work in Papatoetoe. I had to bear with the pain of petrol cost; \$15 per day, \$75 for five days per week and I worked Monday to Friday weekly. I went to Auckland Chambers of Commerce for job seek assistance, after seeing my CV, the guy who was assisting me was amazed with my CV, then he connected me to an employer immediately. The employer hired me as an accountant after observing me for three weeks. The most annoying part is that Work and Income is talking of something not practical and they want you to be in their office to talk nonsense while they cannot offer you the type of work you want. They are adding more trauma to what you already have. I think there should be employers that understand refugee employment needs, and this is where the networking comes in handy. (Ethiopia, 50s)*

Thus, in addition to changing how Work and Income operates, the community consultations wanted ARCC to develop partnerships with businesses such as Auckland Chambers of Commerce to make it easier for refugee background communities to get work experience and then employment. They also said there should be a system where new arrivals are categorised according to their needs so they can be immediately connected to businesses where there are opportunities for training and volunteering so the new arrivals can quickly upgrade, adjust or align their qualifications and skills.

## Summary

The participant comments highlight the successful negotiation of challenges that they face in settlement contexts. Whilst barriers related to discrimination, loss of identity and roles and the renegotiation of culture are significant, participants also evidenced capacities such as flexibility, adaptability and an openness to difference that enabled them to find solutions to difficult problems. The 'resettlement journey' was often mentioned as something that was hard but had also given them an internal resilience to respond to the challenges of daily life. These strengths, alongside the support of community and new friends, have provided the context for men from refugee backgrounds to find new hope and opportunities within Aotearoa New Zealand.

## PRACTICE AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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In this section, we articulate the practice and policy implications relating to the main themes that arose from the participant interviews. Some of the most important take-away messages from this research are:

- Men's sense of self and belonging is powerfully tied to their ability to provide for their families. Thus, initiatives that support men into **meaningful work and educational opportunities** can help foster a sense of hope and adaptability when adjusting to life in Aotearoa New Zealand. The *Pathways to Employment* programme run by the New Zealand Red Cross is an excellent example of this structured support into meaningful work opportunities. ARCC is currently seeking funding to run a pilot of an *Employment Connection* programme that combines mentoring, preparation for employment, support and employer engagement into one package to overcome the loss of potential when skilled and qualified resettled people lack the occupational-specific networks needed to enter the labour market in their own profession.
- **Bridging the cultural gap** between country of origin and Aotearoa New Zealand can be a difficult process. Ensuring that men have a culturally safe place to talk through these challenges and finding appropriate supports is essential. Table 3 on the following page offers some ideas as to how that might be accomplished.
- **Resourcing agencies** tasked to support refugee settlement needs to be enhanced and made more sustainable. Organisations such as ARCC, New Zealand Red Cross, Refugees as Survivors, Auckland Regional Migrant Services, English Language Partners and others play a crucial role in supporting positive outcomes for men from refugee backgrounds. Possible initiatives include specific discussions at the Mangere Refugee Reception Centre during orientation about family functioning and resourcing agencies to provide ongoing parenting support that could help address intergenerational issues. ARCC is also seeking funding and support for a *Community Navigator* model that would employ resettled community members to help new arrivals to navigate and access the support they need from Aotearoa New Zealand's complex array of government departments and non-government agencies.

- There is a greater need for leaders of various refugee background communities to have **stronger relationships** with the New Zealand Police, Oranga Tamariki, district health boards and other key ministries that deliver services and support relevant to the resettlement experience. This can help avoid miscommunications and help (where possible) tailor services so that these are more culturally responsive.
- **English language acquisition** is vitally important. Finding flexible ways to offer this instruction free of charge to men who may be carrying multiple responsibilities will help ensure upward mobility for their career prospects and ability to integrate with the wider society.
- **Family fragmentation** is a real concern and issue. It is important that communities are equipped to help respond to these issues and that men, women and children have a voice in responding to difficulties that arise. This requires ensuring that communities have a place to meet and that various forms of leadership (as defined by age, ethnic background and gender) can help respond to emergent issues.
- **Community based research** can build the human capital and autonomy of people from refugee backgrounds. It provides an important skill set and sense of value within their community and within Aotearoa New Zealand society. This is important given high levels of unemployment and social disengagement amongst resettled community men in Aotearoa New Zealand (despite many being well educated or having high status in their home countries). Community based research can also provide levels of insight about people's experiences as there can be higher levels of trust to discuss sensitive and potentially taboo topics.
- **Fostering sites of belonging** is important. This extends beyond the workplace and educational spaces mentioned above to ensuring that men are able to engage with their geographic community, recreational activity and participate in civic life.

Table 3 on the next page collates both the problems and solutions identified by participants and by the researchers in the data analysis workshop and discussed by the men who took part in community consultations.

More broadly, a possible way to engage with the complexities around men's access to various settlement opportunities is through a rights based approach. Access to various rights has been analysed extensively by the Human Rights Commission (Human Rights Commission, 2010). A '4A standards approach' has been used to look at the right to education, health and work for resettled refugees (see Marlowe & Humpage, 2016). This approach is defined below (see HRC, 2010).

- **Availability**—ensuring pathways to a right are available (and affordable);
- **Accessibility**—eliminating discrimination in relation to accessing a particular right;
- **Acceptability**—focusing on the quality of a right and its conformity to minimum human rights standards;
- **Adaptability**—how well a particular right responds to culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

This conceptual framework provides the basis to work through the complexities of settlement and drill down to how effective certain rights relate to diverse groups, such as men from refugee backgrounds. Rather than looking at whether a right is met or not, this 4A standard helps to unpack, for everyone involved, how well people are able to participate as peers in everyday life. It helps to pinpoint what areas need work and what specific interventions can help improve access to various political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights.

**Table 3: Problems and solutions**

Problems identified	Proposed solutions
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-training/qualification recognition support for people who have qualifications before arriving so they can be employed in relevant jobs. ARCC's planned <i>Employment Connections</i> programme aims to meet this need.</li> <li>• Entrepreneurial mentorship for people who want to start their own business. The WISE collective, which involves refugee background women providing catering for functions, is a good example of this and a similar social enterprise model could be used to build on men's existing skills.</li> </ul>
Problem-solving in the community; preventing the need to accelerate to the level of police intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity building workshops to help build family communication and functioning skills.</li> <li>• Identifying elders in the community who be trained to support families in problem resolution.</li> <li>• Developing a stronger relationship with elders and community leaders with police to help them collaboratively solve emerging issues/concerns.</li> </ul>
Difficulty with understanding and navigating the system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a hub for ARCC's planned <i>Community Navigators</i> who can help people access available support services.</li> <li>• Financial management and budgeting skills.</li> </ul>
Dealing with change and loss of identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer support groups for men – providing space for men to talk through issues.</li> <li>• Programmes to support positive parenting in new contexts.</li> <li>• Ensuring better access to mental health services, including community mental health.</li> </ul>

## CONCLUSION

Aotearoa New Zealand finds itself at an important crossroads with its refugee resettlement programme. As the Government commits to doubling the annual refugee quota established more than twenty years ago of 750 people to 1500 in 2020, there is a need to ensure that this is done well and resourced accordingly. It also highlights the importance of hearing the voices of men, women and children who have a refugee background to ensure that they are consulted.

A particular strength of this study was that it was developed and delivered by people from refugee backgrounds. It highlights the importance of capacity building research and the ways in which partnership with tertiary institutions can support community-based research. It also signals how research topics of a sensitive issue can be understood in rigorous and safe ways by employing refugee background scholars to conduct the work. This research project provides a model for further research into men's experiences using a range of methods.

Finally, and importantly, this research highlights that men from refugee backgrounds have genuine challenges and these are not easily overcome. Despite these obstacles, it is also evident that they have found innovative ways to make meaningful settlement opportunities for themselves and their families. It highlights the necessity of taking a strengths perspective to this work to underscore the important roles that men take with their family, community and the wider Aotearoa New Zealand society.

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Website: [www.arcc.org.nz](http://www.arcc.org.nz) | Phone: + 64 9 846 01110 | Email: [admin@arcc.org.nz](mailto:admin@arcc.org.nz)

Building 2/869 New North Road, Mt Albert, Auckland 1025