

Victoria University of Wellington
Supporting refugee-background students to
achieve their goals

Researchers

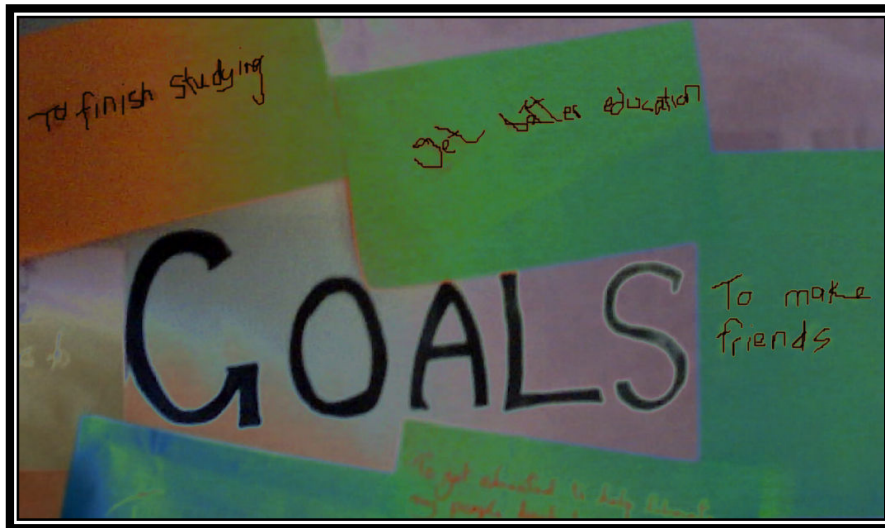
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1 November 2006

Dear Rachel and Judi

We are pleased to present you with our report Victoria University of Wellington: Supporting refugee-background students to achieve their goals. The report is the product of our research completed from July – October 2006 on study support systems available to refugee-background students at the Victoria University of Wellington (VUW). We hope that it will provide impetus for the improvement of study support systems, and assist these students to achieve their university goals.

This report consists of a literature review, and information and analysis from the Participatory Action Research we undertook with refugee-background students and relevant service providers. It provides information on the students' goals at university, and examines what helps, and what hinders, the students from achieving those goals. The report then canvasses services currently available to support of refugee-background students' study and how they can be improved in the future.

This research highlighted the lack of data available on the enrolment of refugee-background students at Victoria University of Wellington. We anticipate this will make scoping and budgeting for future interventions difficult.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank you and your organisations for supporting us to complete this work. If you have any questions and/or comments regarding the interpretation of this report please feel free to contact us at the addresses above.

Yours sincerely



Cedric Horner



Shana Khan



Kathryn Paton

Executive Summary

Introduction

Stemming from a desire to bring about positive change, this project uses Participatory Action Research (PAR) to determine what support systems are currently available to Refugee-Background Students (RBS) at the Victoria University of Wellington (VUW), and how these students can be better supported in the future. It builds on PAR undertaken with high school students in 2005 by another VUW research team, and also, at a broader level, it feeds into the 2006 *Wellington Regional Action Plan for Refugee Health and Wellbeing*. It is the first research specifically on support services for refugee background students within a New Zealand university.

Identity

RBSs are not a readily identifiable group within VUW. Despite the dangers of 'labeling', service providers (SPs) working with RBSs considered that defining the target group was a necessary and important step towards recognising and addressing RBS' needs - our co-researcher agreed. When consulted, students were largely comfortable with the phrase 'refugee-background'. While they realised that the term 'refugee' carries negative connotations within New Zealand, they acknowledged that they had an opportunity at VUW to associate positive messages with being from a refugee background.

Findings and analysis

The 13 students we worked with identified six broad goals they had at university.

- To get an education.
- To finish study.
- To get high marks.
- To socialise.
- To get a good job.
- To help 'our people'.

Students identified 'stepping stones' required to achieve these goals. The most valued of these were motivation, helpful lecturers, a culturally sensitive environment and study groups – all things that require a degree of people contact and support. In general people from refugee backgrounds come from countries and cultures which place stronger emphasis on community support and oral communication. It is evident from the students' experiences that they succeed when given access to tutors and advisors who can provide friendly, personable, one-on-one assistance in a manner to which they can relate.

As part of a broader look at current university policies, participants suggested more could be done to up-skill academic staff on the need to appreciate diversity in their classes and the special circumstances of some of their students. Cultural sensitivity in the university environment was identified by RBS as the number one 'stepping stone' to their achievement, and to maintaining wellbeing during their studies.

A further suggestion was the establishment of an RBS network, collective or club to advocate the needs and promote the presence of RBSs at VUW. The VUW Students' Association indicated that it was prepared to assist in the formation of such an organisation, provided the impetus comes from the students themselves.

SPs considered managing the transition between structured learning to individual university study as vital to success at the tertiary level. Awareness of services (or lack of) also emerged as a major barrier to RBS achievement at university. There is a vast and comprehensive array of services catering to RBSs both within the university and externally. The uptake of these services amongst the students participating in our research appeared to be well below an optimum level. This report presents a strong case for better networking and referral between the services providers, as well as an interagency communications strategy to raise awareness amongst the target students to ensure they get the assistance they need, and to which they are entitled.

Acknowledgements

This project has benefited from the generous contributions of time of many individuals, in particular the students and service providers who participated in our research. We wish to thank them all for their input.

We would like to acknowledge the invaluable contribution Awad Hagos made to this research. Awad volunteered his time to be a co-researcher, and we valued his commitment highly. The additional assistance in designing our workshops that Fuad Farah and Shamim Homayun offered was also much appreciated and valued. We would also like to thank our sponsors, Judi McCallum, (ESOL Assessment and Access Specialist Service), Rachel Ward (Somali Council, and Changemakers' Refugee Forum) for their time, and support of our work. We are grateful to VUWSA Trust for covering the printing costs, which allow for greater distribution of this report, and we would like to acknowledge the assistance that the School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences Administration Office for providing the workshop facilities. Thank you to our GEOG404 classmates for your helpful feedback and advice, and finally, special thanks to Sara Kindon for her insightful guidance and patience throughout the research process, and to our families for being patient and supporting us throughout the trimester.

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Photographs taken by Cedric Horner. Participants not identified for ethical reasons.

Abbreviations

EPP	English Proficiency Programme
FP	Foundation Programme
GP	Graduate Programme
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PD	Participatory Development
RBS	Refugee-Background Student
SP	Service Provider
TEC	Tertiary Education Commission
UP	Undergraduate Programme
VUW	Victoria University of Wellington
WRAPRH	Wellington Regional Action Plan for Refugee Health

Introduction

This report is the result of Participatory Action Research (PAR) undertaken to identify gaps in study support to refugee-background students (RBSs) at the Victoria University of Wellington (VUW). The origin of this research lies with concerns by academics and service providers (SPs), both within and outside VUW, that RBSs could be better supported within the VUW environment.¹ This research is undertaken within the context of the 2006 *Wellington Regional Action Plan for Refugee Health and Wellbeing* (WRAPRHW).

Geography 404: *Geography of Development Studies: Participatory Development and Young People*, coordinated by Sara Kindon at the School of Geography, Environment and Earth Science, VUW, provided an opportunity for our post-graduate research team to use Participatory Development (PD) techniques to begin to address this issue.² This course focuses on PAR as a means to achieve PD.

This research was commissioned to target all RBSs at VUW regardless of age, language, educational level, or time spent in New Zealand. Our project sponsors were:

- Changemakers' Refugee Forum – an active advocacy group for refugee communities in Wellington, and
- ESOL Assessment and Access Specialist Service – a service that provides free personalised needs assessment and educational advice for speakers of English as a second language.

This research is significant because it represents the first study (albeit small) into RBS support services in a New Zealand university. Previous studies have only focused on RBSs within primary and high schools,³

¹ For example, Dr Diane O'Rourke, 2006, who engaged in the early stages of scoping this research.

² See Appendix 1 for research team profile.

³ Including GEOG404 Victoria University of Wellington Research Team, 2005 and Auckland UniServices Ltd, 2000.

leaving RBSs at risk of having less than optimal tertiary educational outcomes.

Background

The scarcity of material on support services for RBSs at New Zealand tertiary institutions justifies some thorough, specific research on the topic. We begin this task by briefly surveying the literary background on RBSs and youth development research, especially that with a participatory focus.

Refugee-background students – who are they?

VUW RBSs are not readily identifiable in the VUW statistics. That said, some group characteristics can be assumed based on characteristics of other students, and of Wellington refugee communities:

- the majority of students are youth
- Wellington refugees come from a variety of cultural, religious, and linguistic backgrounds, but they have some common needs.

In addition to their disempowering status as youth, RBSs are a minority group within the university community. This minority status obstructs them from achieving an effective voice within the university, and therefore, having adequate support structures to meet their unique needs.

Wellington residents from refugee backgrounds represent a plethora of cultures⁴, languages and religions. In addition,

- their reasons for flight from their country of origin, and their journeys to New Zealand, vary significantly
- some have been in New Zealand for long periods, while others recently arrived
- they have different levels of education, and different social statuses
- their cultural differences influence their reaction to the traumatic and stressful events that have preceded their arrival in New Zealand.⁵

⁴ Statistics from Regional Public Health indicate that there are at least 26 refugee communities in the Wellington region (Regional Public Health, 2005).

Nonetheless, RBSs have numerous features and needs in common, including their minority status in New Zealand, psychological experiences and trauma, experience of forced migration, and lack of familiarity with local culture and values. They also have well-developed resilience and coping strategies, and strong networking and communication channels.

Educational needs

- It has been recognised in New Zealand that refugee youth face major challenges as they try to adapt to the New Zealand educational environment, including:
 - lack of understanding or support from families and/or communities
 - lack of access to funds and other financial resources (a New Zealand Immigration Service study noted that of those RBS respondents who had been in New Zealand less than six months, only 28% of those who attempted to get a student loan had actually got one)⁶
 - difficulty in making appropriate study choices
 - difficulty in adapting to western and independent learning styles
 - additional barriers revolving around their English language ability (this is particularly critical at university level where it notably affects note-taking in class, placing students with lower proficiency in writing and formal English language at a distinct disadvantage in even numerically based disciplines such as accounting and computer science).⁷

Compounding these learning challenges are the cultural and societal obstacles refugee youth must overcome, including difficulties in making friends and 'fitting in' in circumstances where their values may not be compatible with the majority group; transport issues; and lack of awareness of health services.

Initiatives underway that may assist RBSs overcome some of these challenges include:

⁵ Auckland UniServices Ltd, 2000.

⁶ New Zealand Immigration Service, 2004.

⁷ Watts and White, 2002; NZIS, 2004.

- steps by the Ministry of Education to foster integration, for instance through the Bilingual Support Workers Within Schools Programme. While this programme applies to school age students only, aspects of the programme may be relevant to tertiary students.
- a comprehensive range of SPs which offer specialised assistance to migrant students at VUW. These services extend from ESOL training to learning support and social opportunities (although this report will show that these services could be better utilised by RBSs).

Why use a Participatory Action Research approach?

If RBSs are to truly overcome these challenges they will require additional targeted support. However, as indicated in the 2006 WRAPRHW, refugee communities have expressed: “nothing about us is without us”. Therefore, any research and action taken to address RBS concerns must be participatory.

Our research team used a PAR approach to working with the VUW RBSs. PAR is about an outsider – a researcher or practitioner – working both with, and for, a community to achieve change in a way that the community desires.⁸ Participants do not simply provide data to be interpreted by the outsider; instead they build on earlier research information, interrogate data, and help define analytical categories during the research process.⁹

At the core of PAR and other PD techniques is the idea that people have a right to participate in decisions that are going to affect their lives.¹⁰ PD techniques (when used appropriately) challenge inequalities and empower the less powerful by creating “new spaces for engagement”,¹¹ enabling people to effectively contribute to decision-making.

⁸ King et al, 2005.

⁹ Kesby et al, 2004.

¹⁰ Desai, 2002.

¹¹ Pain, 2004, 652.

Developing relationships with participants is key to the success of PAR. To get the best and most accurate answers trust must be built between all parties. As Hanson & Hanson point out, control of information is power.¹² Two way information distribution of information at an early stage helps build trust and diminish existing power structures.

Recent PAR projects with Wellington youth from refugee backgrounds have been regarded as successful by all those involved.¹³ The initiatives aimed at not only developing actions for change, but also empowering and building the capacity of the youth as co-researchers and participants.

¹² Hanson & Hanson, 2001.

¹³ Armstrong et al, 2005; King et al, 2005; GEOG404 Victoria University of Wellington Research Team, 2005.

Project Aim

The aim of this project was to work with RBSs and SPs in order to determine what support systems are available to VUW RBSs, and how they can be better supported in the future. This project endeavours to begin the process of positive change.

Research Process (in brief)

- When we engaged in this project, the need for research had already been identified by Sara Kindon (supervisor), Judi McCallum and Rachel Ward (representing our sponsors), and other interested parties. Once we had met with our project sponsors and completed a review of the literature, two points became very clear:
- there were no clearly established networks amongst VUW RBSs
- VUW has no way of recording how many RBS are studying at the university (apart from self-identified English Proficiency Programme (EPP) and Foundation Programme (FP) students receiving Refugee Grants from the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC)).¹⁴

Networks were an essential way of disseminating information about our research and attracting participants to our workshops. Due to the lack of existing RBS networks within the university, we made a concerted effort to establish our own SP and RBS networks by advertising in the VUW student magazine *Salient*, on noticeboards and list-servers, and through personal and sponsor contacts.¹⁵

¹⁴ RBSs enter university as a resident or citizen (not as an 'international student'). EPP records show that throughout 2005 10 RBSs were enrolled in either the EPP or FP. Records available for 2006 show an increase to 17 for the first two trimesters only. Nationalities include Somali, Ethiopian, Cambodian, Afghani, Sudanese and Iraqi. (Information obtained through private correspondence dated 4 September 2006).

¹⁵ See Appendix 2 for details of advertising and Appendix 3 for details on how we developed networks.

Before beginning our research we completed the university's ethics approval process, considering issues such as how we would relate to our research participants, as well as how we would maintain participant privacy, use and store information.¹⁶

We recruited a volunteer co-researcher, who was a VUW graduate from a refugee background, so that our research approach would be more relevant to RBSs. The co-researcher took an active role in designing the research process, leading aspects of research workshops, ensuring that the data and solutions identified by RBSs were clearly reflected in the research report, and co-presenting with the research team on research findings.

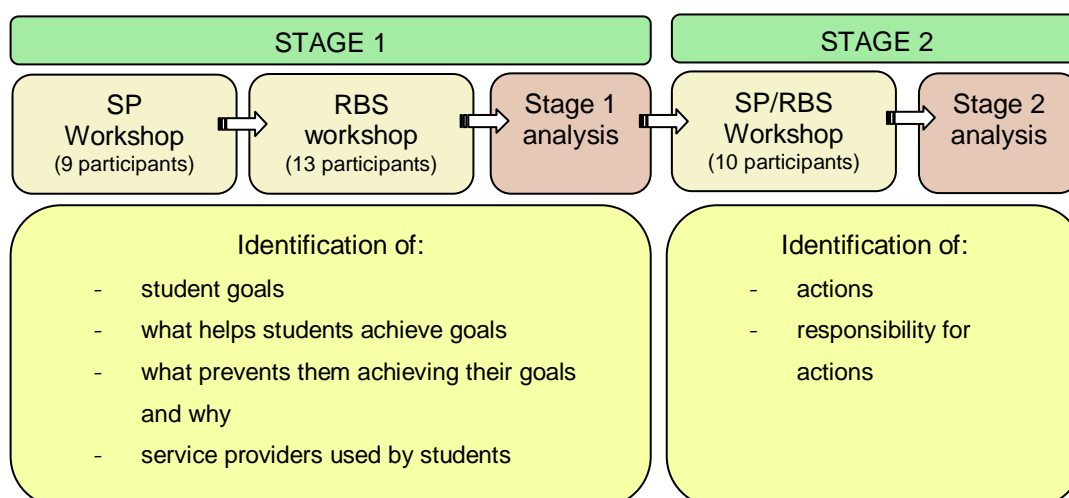
We adopted a PAR methodology, however, achieving full participation and RBS self-facilitation was beyond the scope and capability of this project given the short timeframe in which the research was undertaken.

We planned our research methodology with our co-researcher and with guidance from our assistants, sponsors and supervisor. In the spirit of PAR we consciously ensured that the concerns and ideas of the RBSs themselves would be prominent in our research findings by being central to our methodology. The research approach we adopted is explained in the diagram overleaf.¹⁷

¹⁶ See Appendix 3 for details about the ethics process, and Appendix 4 for the ethics approval.

¹⁷ For details of the research process see Appendix 3, and for participant profiles see Appendix 5.

Diagram 1: Research Process



Throughout the research process we used a number of participatory research techniques including icebreaker and teambuilding exercises, a ‘Challenge Tree’¹⁸, a ‘Stepping Stones’ diagram, Venn Diagrams¹⁹, and a ‘Bull’s-eye’ diagram adapted from an emergency management planning tool.²⁰

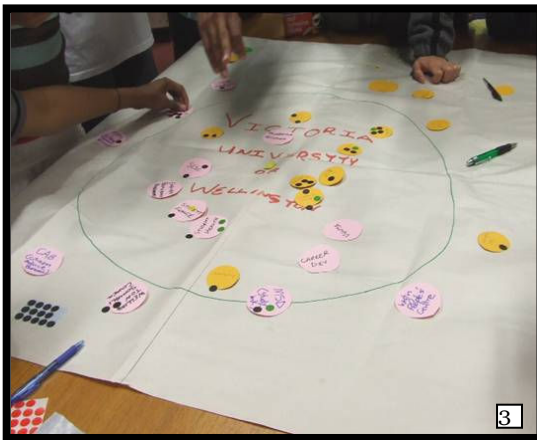
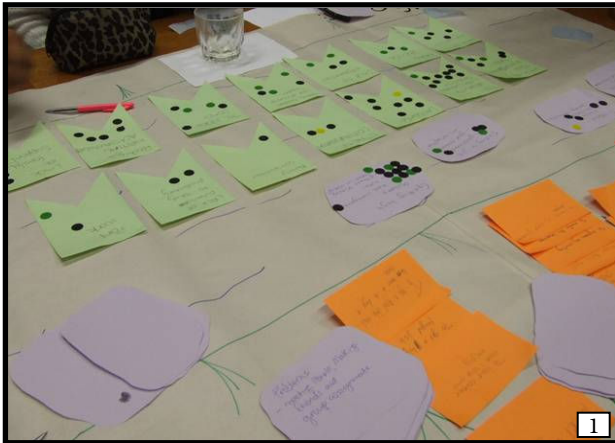
The literature indicated that critical reflexivity is essential both before and during PAR to clarify a researcher’s role and knowledge, and to test whether empowerment and change goals are being met.²¹ Therefore, throughout the research process we regularly debriefed and sought to improve our facilitation and research approach. We also received ongoing guidance from our supervisor.

¹⁸ We preferred not to refer to it as a ‘Problem Tree’ as in most of the PD literature due to the negative connotations that title carries.

¹⁹ We used a simplified version of a Venn Diagram.

²⁰ See Appendix 3 for details.

²¹ Kindon, 2005; Pain, 2004.



Photos 1 & 2
Students working on the 'Stepping Stones' diagram during the RBS workshop, Stage I

Photo 3
Students working on Venn Diagram during the RBS workshop, Stage I

Photo 4
Combined group working on the 'Bull's-Eye' diagram, Stage II

Evaluation of Methodology and Process

Although the research team had not used PD tools before, we found that they worked well and the information generated was extensive, providing us with answers to our questions. The PD approach also provided the RBSs with a forum where they could get to know each other and share the challenges they faced at university. We feel the factors that contributed to the success of the research were:

- the engagement of a co-researcher and additional assistants from refugee-backgrounds at workshops
- input from project sponsors, and good service provider attendance and representation
- piloting the RBS workshop
- a good gender balance in the RBS workshop
- our flexibility (for instance, when Foundation Programme (FP) students did not manage to attend the RBS workshop we took the activities to them).
- However, there were a number of factors that did limit our research, including:
 - 92% of RBS participants were from an African background. Our findings may have been different if the study was more representative of all Wellington's refugee communities.²²
 - tight timeframes, which:
 - made it difficult to build networks and trust, and therefore get greater participant commitment
 - limited the number of workshops, the length of the combined workshop, and the extent to which participants themselves could be involved in analysis
 - meant we had a research workshop during Ramadhan²³ and during a busy time at university, making it difficult for other potential participants to attend.

²² Although it is not clear how many are represented in the university.

- not fully utilising networks of EPP and FP students. It may have been worthwhile to organise a separate RBS workshop at the Karori Campus working around the lengthy FP and EPP study commitments.
- our limited experience in the primary research process, including using PD techniques. More experienced researchers may have used extra vigilance to guarantee all participants contributed equally.

The research methodology could have been improved by allowing more time for additional workshops (scheduled to avoid conflicting commitments). If this had occurred we may have built up better networks and more trust with the RBS participants, it may have given the RBSs more control of the process, thus achieving a greater level of participation and empowerment.

At a practical level, we may have improved RBS attendance at the workshops if we had provided transport, and if we had attended their classes to speak to them about the research. Preferably we would have also engaged our co-researcher earlier and received more advice on advertising for participants.

Although the PAR approach worked well to produce qualitative data which identifies actions that could be taken to support RBSs in their study, we were unable to detect from our research how many RBSs currently attend the VUW. Without knowing the size of this group it will be difficult to scope, and seek funding for, any project stemming from this research.

²³ Ramadhan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar in which religious observances such as fasting occur.

Findings and Analysis

IDENTITY

The issue of identity was raised during the SP workshop, and was considered paramount by both the SPs and our co-researcher because if targeted action is taken to address RBSs' unique challenges, SPs need to be able to identify their target group.

We raised this issue with the RBSs and asked them to discuss how they wished to be identified. The consensus fell on being referred to as 'refugee-background students'.

Although RBSs recognised the need to be an identifiable group, some students considered that the word 'refugee' carried negative connotations and that they had stopped being refugees once they came to New Zealand. The students felt that New Zealanders' knowledge of refugees' countries of origin is restricted to problem issues like conflict, natural disaster and political strife. They were aware of many New Zealanders' anti-immigration attitudes, and their views that new migrants are a drain on the economy, rather than an asset to it. Nevertheless, some students were proud to be from a refugee background and emphasised that being a refugee "is a situation, not an identity". It was suggested that 'refugee' was only a negative term if it was allowed to be, and that it was up to RBSs themselves to create a positive and visible presence at university.

"I am proud to be a refugee"

"Being a 'refugee' is a situation, not an identity"

Student participants

GOALS

Findings

- When completing the 'Stepping Stones' exercise (see Graph 1 overleaf), students identified their goals – what they hoped to achieve at university. The goals were broadly categorised as follows:

Figure 1: Student Goals

- **To get an education** – for the students this signified learning a new discipline and how to write well, being skilled, mastering the English language, and getting study experience in a foreign country. This goal was identified by many students.
- **To finish study** – many students simply wanted to finish their degrees successfully, and to graduate with a qualification. Some wished to go on and obtain a post-graduate degree.
- **To get high marks** – in contrast, very few students said their goal was to get high marks or to 'do well' in exams.
- **To socialise** – many students hope that university would be a place to make new friends, "meet cute boys", and interact with people from other ethnicities.
- **To get a good job** – RBSs looked beyond university. They wished to have a career they would enjoy, to get a high paid job and "be rich". For example, some students wished to make films and be directors.
- **To help 'our people'** – some students hoped to do more at university than simply improve their own lives. They hoped to be a role model for others in the local refugee communities, to research the needs of refugees, and one RBS hoped "to get educated to help liberate my people back home!"

My goal is:
"to get educated to
help liberate my
people back home!"
Student participant

Chart 1: STEPPING STONES: Refugee-background students achieving their goals

Produced by RBS Workshop, Stage I

GOALS

EDUCATION

- ☉ To learn / to get a better education / to be well educated
- ☉ Learn new skills / to get skilled in my field of study
- ☉ To master the language
- ☉ To improve my writing
- ☉ To get experience studying in a foreign country

GET HIGH MARKS

- #### TO GET A GOOD JOB
- ☉ To have a career that I enjoy
 - ☉ To make film / to become a director
 - ☉ To be rich
 - ☉ To get a high paid job
 - ☉ To buy a house

FINISH STUDY

- ☉ To graduate / to get a qualification
- ☉ To do further studies / have a post-graduate degree
- ☉ To finish my degree successfully

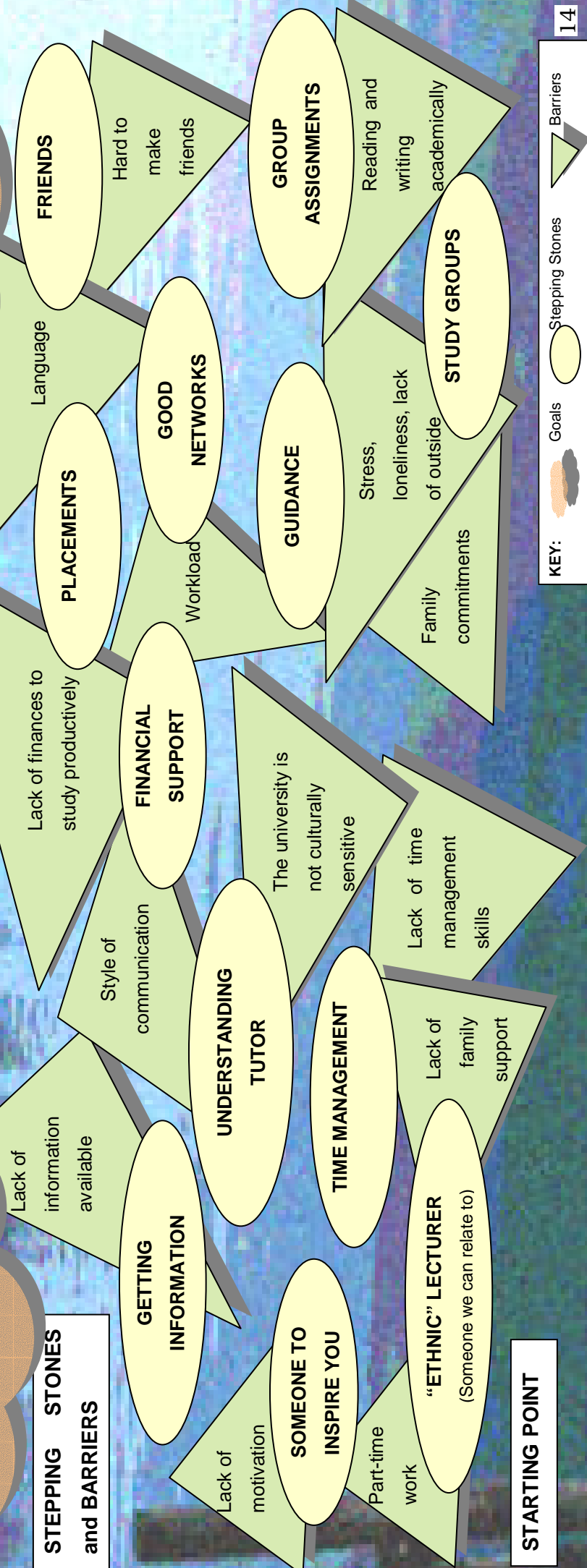
SOCIALISE

- ☉ Make new friends
- ☉ Meet cute boys
- ☉ Interact with other societies

TO HELP

- ☉ To do more research in refugee health needs
- ☉ To get educated to help liberate my people back home!
- ☉ To encourage refugee migrants to study

STEPPING STONES and BARRIERS



STARTING POINT

KEY:

- ☉ Goals
- Stepping Stones
- △ Barriers

Discussion

The RBS' goals at university ranged from specific ambitions such as to be a film director or to “meet cute boys”, to broader goals like having a career that they enjoy, or learning new skills. We note that most of these goals do not differ considerably from the likely goals and ambitions of New Zealand-born students.

We consider that the main differences lay with their low academic ambitions, and their strong feeling of responsibility toward their own communities.

Two students said that a pass was all they wanted from their degree, and numerous students simply wished to finish successfully. For many, achieving high marks was not seen as an attainable goal. This reflects the many barriers RSBs face studying at tertiary level, including the difficulty of using academic English.²⁴ That said, improvement of English literacy was cited as a critical educational aspiration. Students hoped that university would provide them with the opportunity to improve their fluency in English, however, many RBSs did not appreciate the literacy demands of academic study until they had actually enrolled.

Some students had a sense of responsibility toward their own communities, both in New Zealand and in their countries of origin. This reflects the impact that refugees are seen to have on worldwide development. For instance, Nieburg-Sorenson et al identify numerous positive (and negative) effects that refugee populations have on the countries through which they move, and observe that refugees who have successfully settled inside their country of asylum may also benefit their home country through remittances, or by returning to their country of origin with new skills.²⁵

²⁴ See 'Achieving Goals, p16.

²⁵ Nieburg-Sorenson et al, 2002.

ACHIEVING GOALS

Findings

During the workshops the RBSs collectively identified ‘stepping stones’ to help achieve their goals, and ‘barriers’ that prevent achievement of those goals. They then marked those that were key to them individually.²⁶ Good time management, having study groups and “ethnic lecturers” (someone they could relate to)²⁷ featured highly as ‘stepping stones’ for the period while they were at university, and having access to placements when transitioning into the workforce was important in the post-graduation period.

Similarly, SPs identified particular challenges that RBSs faced at university from the SP perspective, including transitioning into self-learning, not knowing when to get help and how to get it, plus other social, cultural, and academic challenges (see Chart 2 overleaf).

During the Stage I analysis, the research team considered how these barriers and challenges could be overcome, and reworded each as a new ‘stepping stone’. The ‘stepping stones’ were then collated, categorised and loosely prioritised. This prioritisation was primarily based on the RBS’ own ranking, but it was also influenced by the RBS’ conversations, as well as the SPs’ ‘Challenge Tree’ exercise.²⁸ This categorisation is set out in Table 1 on page 18.

²⁶ See Appendix 6, Tables 4 & 5; and Chart 1, p14.

²⁷ Some students felt they could only relate to lecturers who were not New Zealand born, others felt this was an unrealistic expectation and just wanted somebody who would communicate with them in a manner they could relate to.

²⁸ See Chart 2 overleaf.

Chart 2: CHALLENGE TREE: Service Provider perceptions of challenges faced by refugee-background students

background students

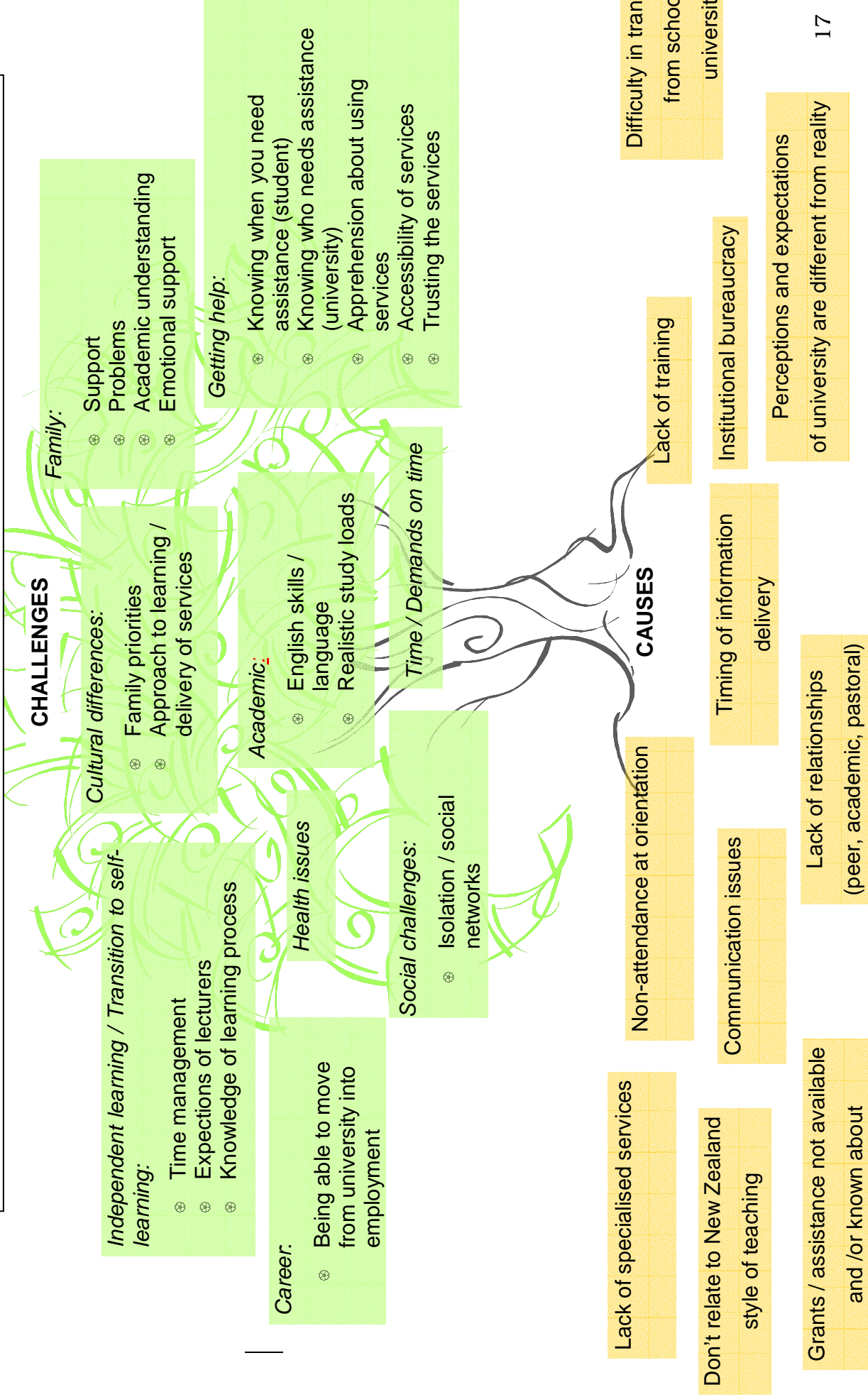


Table 1: Categorisation and prioritisation of all stepping stones

Priority ²⁹	Category	Stepping Stone
HIGHER	A culturally sensitive, friendly environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A culturally sensitive university • "Ethnic" lecturer (someone I can relate to) • Tutor is understanding of students • Style of communication students relate to
	Skills and knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible information (about services, etc) • An ability to read and write academically • Good language skills • Good time management skills • Students understand expectations of lecturers • Knowledge of self-learning process
	Encouragement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation • Someone to inspire you • Study groups
	Help transitioning into work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placements
	Manageable workload	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a manageable workload
MEDIUM	Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing when to get support • Emotional support • Family support • Financial support • Outside support • University identifies who needs assistance • Good networks • Study groups
	Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career advice • Guidance (study)
	Good services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services are accessible • Services are dependable and trustworthy
LOWER	Social opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group assignments • Ways to make friends • Study groups
	Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good health • Minimal stress

²⁹ Each of the categories have been identified by students and therefore can be considered to be priorities, despite ranking. For ranking method see Appendix 3.

Discussion

Although participating RBSs had many differences (for instance, cultural, religious, and historical differences), the stepping stones and barriers they each identified were similar. The differing needs at university were most prominent between younger and more mature students, particularly in the area of social opportunities, as the more mature students did not have the same access to social spaces such as those offered by Evolve.³⁰

The challenges faced by RBSs at VUW appear to follow the same pattern as challenges faced by RBSs at the high school level (as identified in the literature).³¹ However, at the university level, students ranked the need for a culturally sensitive environment as the most important stepping stone to achievement (chosen by 11 out of 13 participants).³² SPs felt that cultural differences added to awareness and communication problems as well as reinforcing RBSs status as second-class citizens. For instance, many RBSs come from oral traditions, and yet when they have sought assistance from lecturers, tutors and other service providers, feedback has been given only in writing.³³ Furthermore, some students requested more visual aids to be used in teaching. One participant explained: “I listen, I notice; I see, I learn.”³⁴

Lack of cultural sensitivity

“The lecturer showed a movie about Africa, it portrayed that Africans are not human”.

“There is institutional racism.”

“Tutors are not approachable, they make nasty comments.”

Student participants

³⁰ See Appendix 6, Table 7.

³¹ See ‘Background’ section, p2.

³² See Appendix 6, Table 7.

³³ SP participants’ conversation in SP workshop, Stage I.

³⁴ Student participant in SP workshop, Stage I.

VUW RBSs also have difficulty knowing when and how to get information. Many RBSs have found themselves overloaded with courses at university because they enrol in a normal fulltime programme like their New Zealand-born colleagues. They do this to finish at the same time as these colleagues and/or to get a student allowance. However, because of the unique challenges they face at university, they struggle to keep up with the work, and do not fulfil their potential.

The early transition from rote learning to independent, creative study is critical to success at university. Many students come from schools where they are being pushed by a teacher (either at a New Zealand high school or a school in their home country). Learning styles differ across countries and it is difficult for some new students, who are used to being driven, to adapt into New Zealand universities' loosely structured learning environments. One SP participant commented that many RBSs are not aware of the expectation on university students to be in charge of their own learning.

Both RBSs and SPs identified practical skills that RBSs needed to have to meet their university goals, including reading and writing academically, good time management, and good language skills. All the students in the workshop had English as a second or third language, and for those students who had learnt English before coming to New Zealand, the style of English used and taught in their home country was different.

Getting support and advice from their colleagues, and their lecturers, was important to students. However, where services were available to help RBSs, SPs felt that there was poor uptake, possibly because they were delivered in ways that did not attract RBSs. This assumption was confirmed by the RBS participants.

Family assistance, and community support and endorsement for study was also seen as important for long-term success at tertiary level. RBSs often experienced pressures to work and make money instead. These financial pressures usually resulted in students having to work part time, further

compromising their academic achievement and social life at university. Some students were unaware of their entitlements through Studylink.³⁵ This finding reflects the literature which shows a slow uptake among RBSs of student loans,³⁶ possibly because they find assistance centres intimidating and are easily discouraged.

Acceptance by VUW of RBSs as capable students was not evident to some participants at our workshop. One young African male told us of his experience with an enrolment advisor when he informed them of his desire to study in the field of liberal arts. The advisor asked him “are you sure you want to do this?” Recent migrants apparently tend to study commerce or computer science, and the advisor had assumed that as a recent migrant he might be “out of place” in liberal arts.

The need for encouragement and motivation was a high priority for participants (this need is not as prevalent in the high school-focused literature). Personal or one-on-one support was considered essential to maintaining motivation (as well gaining much needed academic guidance). Students gave examples of how they had been assisted by helpful tutors, or just as commonly, ignored by unhelpful lecturers who did not consider it their role to provide ‘low-level’ assistance. While this may currently be an inescapable aspect of being in a class of several hundred, it is unfortunate that students’ potential is not being achieved when personal contact time appears to help RBSs considerably.³⁷

Even though many RBS participants identified socialising as a goal, fewer formally prioritised the socially-focussed ‘stepping stones’. They did, however, speak about the difficulty they had in ‘fitting in’. Group assignments and study groups were seen as excellent ways of forming relationships with others. These activities also provide opportunities for dialogue with native English speakers.

³⁵ See Appendix 6, Table 7.

³⁶ New Zealand Immigration Service, 2004.

³⁷ See ‘Service Usage’ (p23) for discussion of what other services are available.

Good health did not feature very highly as a RBS priority, although the collective discussion of the RBSs demonstrated the high level of stress they were under, which would in turn impact significantly on student health and their ability to achieve their goals.

■ CAUSES

- Although there is extensive commentary in the literature about the reasons RBSs face unique challenges, SPs were invited to discuss this topic in order to consolidate understanding, and extract VUW-specific factors.³⁸ From the SP perspective the reasons included:
- a lack of specialised services at VUW
- that RBSs do not relate to the New Zealand style of teaching
- that RBSs are unaware of grants and assistance available to them³⁹
- non-attendance of RBSs at orientation
- communication issues faced by RBSs
- inappropriate timing of information delivery (delivered when RBSs not there, and not when RBSs need it)
- RBSs lack of relationships within the university (eg peer, academic, and pastoral relationships)
- lack of training of university and SP staff to assist RBS appropriately
- institutional bureaucracy
- difficulty faced by RBSs in transitioning from school to university, in particular around the need to use academic English, and to adapt to self-learning
- RBS perceptions of VUW, which are different to the reality.

³⁸ See Chart 2, p17.

³⁹ For instance, most of the participants in both the SP and RSB workshops had not heard of 'limited full-time status' that can be given by Studylink where students cannot study full-time for a good reason. This status allows those students to receive a Student Allowance while in effect studying part-time.

SERVICE USAGE

Findings

RBSs identified the following SPs within the university as being those they used most to achieve their goals:

Table 2: Service providers inside Victoria University of Wellington

Service Provider (inside university)	# Students (of 13)
University Library	7
Islamic Club	6
Computer lab	5
Gym	5
Student Learning Support Centre	5
Student Health	4
Sports clubs	3
Student Finance	3
Arabic Club	2
Career Development	2
Counselling	2
Dancing group	2
English Proficiency Programme	2
Foundation Studies	2
VUWSA	1

Additional SPs identified,⁴⁰ that may be able to offer further assistance to RBSs, include the School of Linguistics and Applied Language (which teaches an academic writing programme for speakers of English as a second language); the University Teaching Development Centre; the VUW Admissions and Enrolment Office, Career Services; the Multicultural Friends and Families Club; Kiwi Connections and the Mature Students' Network.

RBSs also identified the following SPs outside of the university:

⁴⁰ Additional SPs were identified in Stage I analysis or Stage 2 workshop.

Table 3: Service providers outside Victoria University of Wellington

Service Provider (outside university)	# Students (of 13)
Evolve	10
Evolve (African Club) ⁴¹	7
Community Law Centre	5
MSD – Studylink	5
Wellington City library	5
Wellington Somali Council	5
Changemakers	3
Refugee Migrant Service	3
Wellington Peoples' Centre	1
Citizen Advice Bureau	1

Additional external SPs identified⁴² include ESOL Assessment and Access Specialist Service; the Wellington City Council; the Tertiary Education Commission (responsible for the grants to RBSs to participate in EPP and FP); and the Ministry of Education (which recently published *Families Learning Together* - a series of booklets in a range of languages to help refugee and migrant families understand aspects of schooling in New Zealand.)

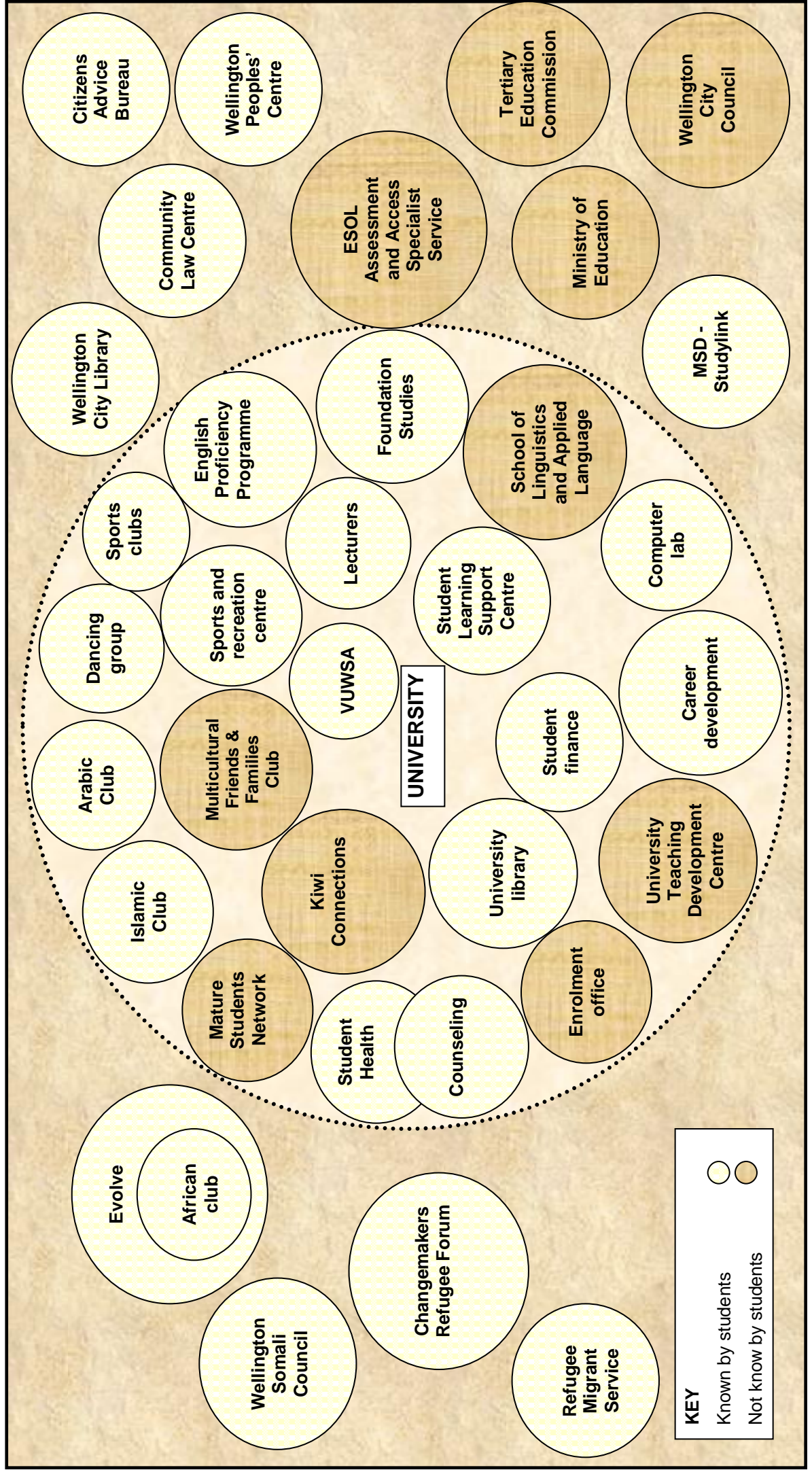
These services are all represented in Graph 3 overleaf developed from the Stage I RBS and SP workshops.⁴³ For descriptions, and the RBS participants' experiences of those services see Appendix 4, Table 7.

⁴¹ Students chose to identify the African Club separately from Evolve.

⁴² In Stage I analysis or Stage 2 workshop.

⁴³ See detailed research process, Appendix 3.

Chart 3: Service Providers that Assist Students in Achieving Their University Goals



Discussion

RBS participants discussed their experiences of the services they had used. There were no surprises in which factors attracted RBSs to services. These included: ease of accessibility, friendly and approachable staff who spoke slowly and clearly, and individualised service. Evolve - an external non-profit organisation which provides a hangout space for youth aged 10-25 years as well as wrap-around services such as medical and employment advice, and a study space - was particularly popular among those RBS participants who were under the age of 25.

- Some services, such as those provided by VUW Students' Association, Wellington Peoples' Centre and Citizen Advice Bureau, are not frequently used by the RBS participants because the RBSs are unaware of exactly what services they provide. In contrast, RBSs were particularly critical of some SPs and avoided their services as much as possible. This included SPs that were:
 - difficult to approach and deal with
 - inflexible and unhelpful
 - hard to book
 - difficult to relate to, using a "white person" approach
 - "like computers", rude and inefficient, and did not spend time with the RBSs.

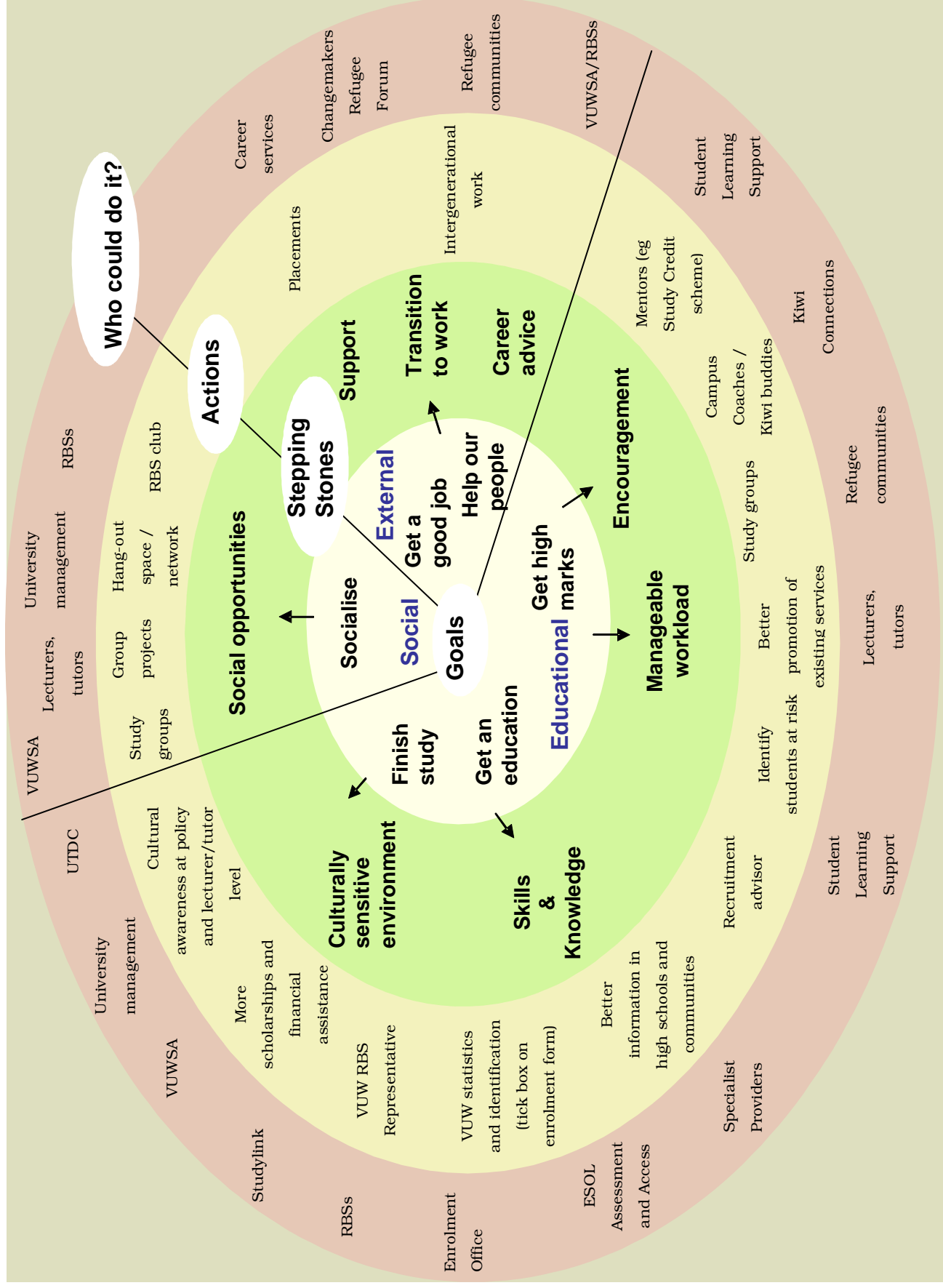
In the combined workshop it was noted that once one student had a bad experience with a SP, they told their friends and associates, leading to a spread of rumours about bad service. This discouraged students from using that service for future support.

IMPROVING SERVICES

Findings

All three workshops featured discussion about how current services to RBSs could be improved and our final workshop provided an opportunity for RBSs and SPs to explore this more thoroughly. Participants built on earlier findings and properly connected the identified goals and needs with actions for the future (see Chart 4 overleaf). It became clear to the participants the actions fell into three broad areas: internal institutional actions, internal individual-focused actions, and external actions.

Chart 4: Improving refugee-background student support systems



Discussion

■ **Internal: Institutional Action**

- Institutional policy change – a lack of cultural sensitivity was seen as entrenched in the institutional structure of VUW. Although the Education Act 1989 seeks to address this by encouraging university councils to reflect “so far as is reasonably practicable the ethnic and socio-economic diversity of the communities served by the institution”,⁴⁴ in the case of the minority communities the RBSs represent, this has not necessarily been possible. RBSs themselves suggested having one RBS representative on the Council. There is also a case for a review of university policies to ensure students can operate in a culturally sensitive environment.
- Administrative change – participants suggested a tick-box be included in enrolment forms for RBSs to self-identify on entry into VUW (similar to Māori and Pacific students). This would enable the university to collect enrolment data and provide those students with the additional information and support they need from the beginning.⁴⁵
- Professional development (lecturers and tutors) – participants clearly signaled that lecturers and tutors need to provide positive, encouraging messages to RBSs, be approachable, listen and communicate orally (as well as in writing), and to teach in a manner that is not offensive and discriminatory to ethnic students. Participants felt that the university has a responsibility to ensure staff receive the professional development training they need to achieve this. It was also suggested that a cultural sensitivity measure be added to lecturer evaluation forms.
- Service provision awareness and trust – this research identifies numerous helpful services already available to RBSs. The poor

⁴⁴ Section 191.

⁴⁵ It is important to note that some RBSs may not wish to identify as being from a refugee background. An explanation of why this information is important would encourage self-identification.

uptake of these services can mostly be attributed to low awareness but also the lack of confidence in services. There is an opportunity for SPs to examine their own internal systems and policies to determine how they could best serve their RBS clientele.⁴⁶ Key to being trusted by RBSs is being reliable and delivering a consistent service. To raise awareness SPs could promote their service numerous times during the year, and in locations, and at times, that RBSs are likely to receive the information.

- Positive messages – both VUW and RBSs need to send positive messages about what it means to be from a refugee background. It was suggested that celebrations could be held on World Refugee Day, and be organised by a RBS group with the support of VUWSA and the university.

■ **Internal: Individually – Focused Action (Student level)**

- Mentors / Campus Coaches – some participants suggested having Campus Coaches⁴⁷ or mentors to whom RBSs can relate. They would not only provide RBSs with the one-on-one academic support they need, but also offer an opportunity for the RBSs to break through barriers of shyness or discomfort in speaking about their needs. Some RBSs prefer to have a mentor of the same ethnicity, but for others this is not a problem, as long as the coaches or mentors are understanding and approachable, and know how to deal with the individual requirements of students.
- Study groups – study groups provide academic support, social opportunities and encouragement to students. RBSs and SPs alike saw value in establishing RBS study groups in the university. There was a discussion about whether the study groups should be situated internally, or externally to the university as an extension to the

⁴⁶ See specific feedback from RBS participants to some SPs in Appendix 6, Table 7.

⁴⁷ 'Campus Coaches' are a new VUW Student Services initiative for the New Students Orientation 2007. They will buddy a small group of students and see them through orientation and the first few weeks of university.

current 'Homework Club' for high school students, but it was recommended that study groups needed to remain in the university to encourage networking of VUW RBSs on campus.

- RBS network and space – RBSs do not have established networks in VUW that facilitate discussion of RBS-specific issues. There was a desire amongst participants for a formal RBS network to be established, and for a space to be made available for RBSs to meet, and share experiences and information. If a permanent space was not available to RBSs, it was suggested that a regular meeting time and space could be scheduled, similar to the Mature Student Network model.⁴⁸

■ **External Actions**

- Enhanced pre-enrolment advice – all participants advocated for more pre-enrolment academic and career advice delivered in a manner that is accessible to students (eg oral, not written advice). This would need to be delivered by a person RBSs can relate to, and must assist students in assessing the particular challenges they will face in the university, and what workload would be realistic for them. (The current services delivered by ESOL Assessment and Access may fill this requirement, but these services need to be further promoted within refugee communities).
- Improved service provider networking and integration – to improve the delivery of support to RBSs, SPs would benefit from frequent dialogue with one another, by giving referrals, and by collaborating on service delivery where appropriate.
- Post-graduation work placements – upon graduation RBSs tend to find it harder to find employment than their New Zealand-born colleagues. Opportunities for work placements would assist in this transition.

⁴⁸ See Appendix 6, Table 7.

- Community awareness and support – RBS participants revealed the importance of family and community support in helping them to achieve their goals. In order to provide support refugee communities need to be more aware of the expectations placed on VUW students.
- Personalised service provision – RBSs were critical of SPs that delivered their services in a mechanistic fashion, failing to recognise that RBSs have unique needs. More personalised and less intimidating services are likely to have a positive impact on RBS uptake and effectiveness of the services.

Conclusions

This research is a response to concerns raised by some SPs and VUW academics that RBSs could be better supported to meet their potential within the VUW environment. RBSs come from a variety of backgrounds and world views, but they each bring to their study strengths such as resilience and coping strategies that can contribute to their success within the university. It is these strengths that we hope can be built on to assist RBSs achieve their goals at VUW.

Our research, in conjunction with previous literature, shows that many of the challenges faced by RBSs at VUW are different to those faced by New Zealand-born students and ‘international students’. The key factors the students identified to help them overcome these challenges were those that required a degree of people contact and support.

There are already a number of services available to help students surmount these challenges including ESOL Assessment and Access Service, the English Proficiency Programme, Foundation Studies, Student Learning Support Centre, Career Development, Student Finance, Studylink, Evolve, and a wide range of clubs. However, these services appear to be under-utilised by RBSs due to:

- lack of awareness of the services
- lack of trust in the SP

- service delivery in a manner to which the RBSs cannot relate.

Although this research identifies that RBSs *have specific needs* that must be addressed, *the extent of these needs* is not known because there are no enrolment figures for RBSs. This means that there may be insufficient data to get commitment from concerned parties to initiate positive action. Therefore, it is particularly important that enrolment data is obtained in the near future.

This study identifies numerous actions that can be taken to assist RBSs in fulfilling their university goals. However, focus should be first given to addressing those stepping stones that the RBSs have themselves identified as high priorities such as creating a culturally sensitive university; ensuring that information about services is accessible and delivered in a way the RBSs can relate to; and having mentors, study groups and RBS networks through which RBSs can get support and motivation.

Those services that were preferred by the RBS participants were those that were friendly, accessible and approachable, and where the staff spoke slowly, clearly and provided individualised service. These are strengths that can be built on and replicated by SPs to improve service uptake, and to enable RBSs to fulfil their potential.

Recommendations

Having reflected on the priorities and actions identified in our research, our team recommends that ESOL Assessment and Access and the Changemakers Refugee Forum seek to advocate for:

- better data collection within VUW (eg including a box to tick on the enrolment form identifying refugee background students), and further national research on the needs of RBSs at tertiary level
- consistently reliable and culturally appropriate service delivery by all SPs, particularly within VUW
- improved provision of information in a culturally appropriate manner. (It is important that RBSs are given an opportunity to comment on the level of cultural sensitivity, for instance by placing a cultural sensitivity measure on lecturer evaluation forms)
- better recognition (by both the RBSs and SPs) that RBSs face distinct challenges at VUW
- an interagency communications plan to target potential VUW RBS and raise awareness of services and assistance at VUW
- improved SP and RBS networks
- involvement of RBSs in decisions that will effect their education.

Appendices

APPENDIX 1: RESEARCH TEAM PROFILE

Awad Hagos is originally from Ethiopia, but was resettled as a refugee to New Zealand in 2001 from Sudan. He graduated from the Victoria University of Wellington with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science. Awad's main interest is community development and he is currently involved with refugee background communities in Wellington, particularly with youth.

Cedric Horner is a part-time post-graduate student working towards a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Geography. He has a special interest in economic development and the geography of poverty. Cedric works full-time at the Ministry of Economic Development in a small policy team dealing with international environmental agreements and regulation. He has experience as a summer camp counselor for disadvantaged 7 to 11 year olds in Porirua, Wellington.

Shana Khan holds a Bachelor of Education and a postgraduate degree in Geography from the University of the South Pacific (USP). She is currently completing a Master of Development Studies at Victoria University of Wellington. Most of Shana's experience lies in the field of youth. Shana was a secondary school teacher in Fiji and taught from Forms 1-7. She was also tutor and marker for USP, and played an advisory role to student youth from all of Fiji's different ethnic groups. Furthermore, Shana has worked with various youth groups in her community ranging from Muslim religious groups to school student groups. At present she is liaising with non-government organisations in Fiji to carry out her Masters research on the status of women in informal settlements and the role of government and non-governmental organisations in the welfare of this vulnerable group in Fiji's urban areas.

Kathryn Paton holds a Bachelor of Laws and a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Auckland. She has also completed a post-graduate short course at the American University of Cairo on *Advanced Refugee and*

Human Rights Law, and is currently completing a Master of Development Studies at Victoria University of Wellington. Kathryn has worked with, and for, refugee and migrant communities in various capacities, including as a support worker (New Zealand), a legal advisor (Egypt), a researcher into refugee health promotion (New Zealand), and as an employee of the New Zealand Immigration Service. Kathryn also has experience in working with youth from a period spent as an environmental instructor in Mexico. Kathryn is currently employed as an Analyst with the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector, Ministry of Social Development.

APPENDIX 2: ADVERTISING

This poster (or similar versions) were placed around the university and were distributed throughout refugee community networks from 28 August to 10 September 2006. An abbreviated version also appeared in the student magazine *Salient*. By providing pizza we hoped that students would feel they could spare the time to participate in our study. However, we received one complaint that the offer of pizza sent negative messages about refugee-background students. Any offence caused was unintentional.

Are you a student from a Refugee background? Do you want free Pizza?

If so, we need your help!

We are a small group of Geography post-graduate students doing a participatory project to inform the development of support services for refugee-background students at Victoria University.

We are interested in gaining stories about your experiences of studying at Vic, as they relate to existing services (such as English language and financial assistance). We also want to work with you to look at what might be done to improve support systems and enhance refugee-background students' academic success.

We need men and women from as many cultures/backgrounds as possible, and will work with men and women separately if desired. Wide representation of the refugee community is very important for the project's success.

The project has the support of the Changemakers' Refugee Forum in Wellington and service providers at VUW. The project report will be presented in early October.

We intend to hold our workshops in the evenings. Pizza will be provided so you won't have to worry about dinner.

If you are interested, please contact [Cedric Horner](#) by 8 September on

462 4246 (day)
976 6677 (night)
021 132 1430 (mobile)

Or email cedric.horner@gmail.com

Or, contact [Shana Khan](#) on shankhan1@student.vuw.ac.nz

APPENDIX 3: DETAILED RESEARCH PROCESS

Getting started

When we engaged in this project, the need for research had already been identified by our sponsors in conjunction with Sara Kindon (supervisor) and other interested parties.

We held an initial meeting with our project sponsors in July 2006, during which time we were briefed on their perception of the issue at hand, as well as what they hoped would be achieved through the research. We discussed the roles of each of the stakeholders in the research process, and the Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology. We then completed a review of the literature in order to familiarise ourselves with the issues facing refugee-background students (RBSs).

Three points became very clear to us at this stage:

- there is no research on RBSs within New Zealand tertiary education
- there are no clearly established networks amongst RBSs at the university
- the university has no way of recording how many RBSs are studying at the university (apart from self-identified English Proficiency Programme (EPP) and Foundation Programme (FP) students receiving Refugee Grants from the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC)).

Initial Planning and Ethics Approval

The first step we took as a research team was to clearly define the aim of the research, the questions that we hoped to answer, and the timeframes within which the research would be undertaken.

We identified our two sources of primary information – Service Providers (SPs) and RBSs – and considered how we related to each of these groups, and how our differences or commonalities would impact on our ability to work with the groups when using participatory research techniques. We then considered other ethical issues as part of the university's ethics approval process, such as participant privacy, and storage and usage of information.

We developed an initial framework for our research, and anticipated our research methods would consist of:

- an SP workshop and informal interviews⁴⁹
- RBS workshops (one or two).

We then created information sheets and consent forms for our research participants.⁵⁰

In order that our research approach would be more relevant to the RBSs, we decided that it would be beneficial to design the details of our research methodology with co-researcher(s) from a refugee background. We anticipated that co-researcher(s) would also take an active role in leading aspects of the workshops, as well as helping to ensure that the data and solutions identified by the RBSs would be clearly reflected in the research report.

⁴⁹ Interviews were later considered unnecessary.

⁵⁰ See Appendix 4 for a copy of the ethics approval form, information sheets and consent forms. The interview aide memoire, information sheet and consent form have been omitted as they were not used.

Establishing Networks and Identifying Co-researcher(s)

- Networks were an essential way of attracting SPs and participants from refugee backgrounds. Due to the lack of existing RBS networks within the university, we made a concerted effort to establish both:
- SP networks (beginning with contacts provided to us by our sponsors and Sara Kinson)
- RBS networks (beginning with personal contacts, contacts provided to us by our sponsors and co-researchers, and later through advertising through posters, list-servers and an advertisement in the student magazine *Salient*.⁵¹)

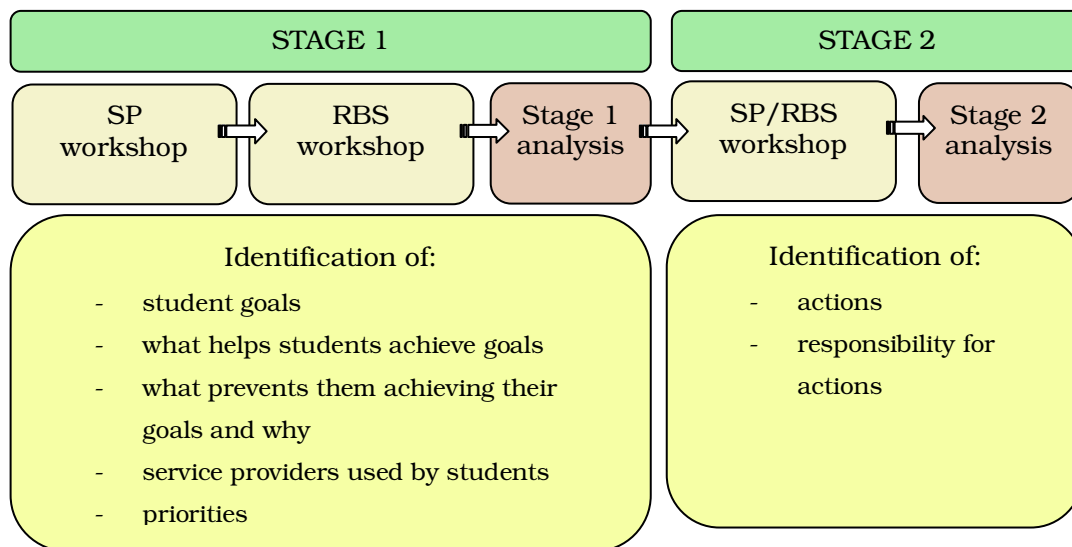
Networking continued throughout the first stage of our research process. While attempting to establish networks we identified potential co-researchers. We realised that it was difficult for current students who were completing assignments and studying for exams to commit to being a co-researcher, therefore, we also approached a recent Victoria University of Wellington (VUW) graduate, Awad Hagos, who agreed to assist. Two other students, Fuad Farah and Shamim Hodayun also agreed to assist in planning some of the activities that were going to take place during the workshops.

⁵¹ See Appendix 2.

Workshops and Analysis

We planned our research methodology with our co-researcher and with guidance from our assistants, sponsors and supervisor. The PAR approach is concerned with giving a voice to those that are the focus of the research, thus we were conscious that the concerns and ideas of the RBSs themselves needed to be central to our methodology and prominent in our research findings.

We adopted the following research approach:



The research team (including co-researcher) shared the roles of:

- facilitator
- facilitator assistant
- note-taker (in PAR it is important to capture the voice of participants by recording conversations during the workshops).

The venue we chose for all the workshops was the seminar/common room in the School of Environment, Geography and Earth Sciences at Kelburn Campus, Victoria University of Wellington due to its convenience for most participants, and because it had kitchen facilities.

Throughout the research process we debriefed on each workshop and sought ways to improve our facilitation. We also received ongoing guidance from our supervisor.

Stage 1

▣ Service Provider Workshop

The first workshop was conducted with nine SP participants on a weekday morning for two hours (morning tea was provided).⁵² The goals of this workshop were to:

- create a space for SPs to network and to become familiar with each others' services (particularly in relation to how they impact on RBSs)
- identify the challenges faced by RBSs from a SP perspective, and to consolidate understanding amongst the group about why RBSs face these particular challenges.

The format of the SP workshop was:

- **A 'Challenge Tree'** - SPs' were asked to consider "what are some of the challenges faced by SRBs?" (recorded as tree branches), and then "what are the roots/causes of those challenges?" (recorded as tree roots - see Chart 2, p17) These questions were first considered in small groups, and then shared amongst the larger group generating further discussion.
- **Morning tea**
- **A 'Venn diagram'** - SPs were asked to write the name of their provider (plus other SPs they knew of), and the services they provided to RBS onto circles which were then placed on a large sheet to indicate whether the service was internal to the university or external. The SPs then spoke about their services, and participants could ask each other questions and find connections.

⁵² Two of which were also RBSs.

▣ Refugee-Background Student Workshop

The second workshop was held in the evening for three hours with RBSs. Pizza and refreshments were available to participants. 11 students attended the scheduled workshop from EPP, Undergraduate Programmes (UP), and Graduate Programmes (GP)⁵³. In addition we visited the VUW Karori Campus so that two FP students could add their ideas to the charts developed in the RBS workshop. In total 13 students from refugee backgrounds participated in these activities, representing the Somali, Ethiopian, Karen and Sudanese communities.⁵⁴

The goal of this workshop was to:

- provide a space for RBSs to get to know each other
- identify RBS goals and stepping stones / impediments to achieving those goals
- identify current services used by students, and services they would like to see in the future.

The format of the RBS workshop was:

- **'My name means' introductory exercise** – each person introduced him/herself and explained the significance of his/her name. This exercise was intended to encourage sharing of information.
- **'5 things about me' icebreaker** – in order to build up trust in the group we undertook a further icebreaker whereby each person had to find five things they had in common with two other people in the group. We then regrouped and the participants shared their commonalities with the whole group.

⁵³ Two of these participants were also SP representatives.

⁵⁴ As records of RBSs are not collected by VUW we cannot tell to what extent this represents the diversity of VUW RBSs. See Appendix 5 for details on participants.

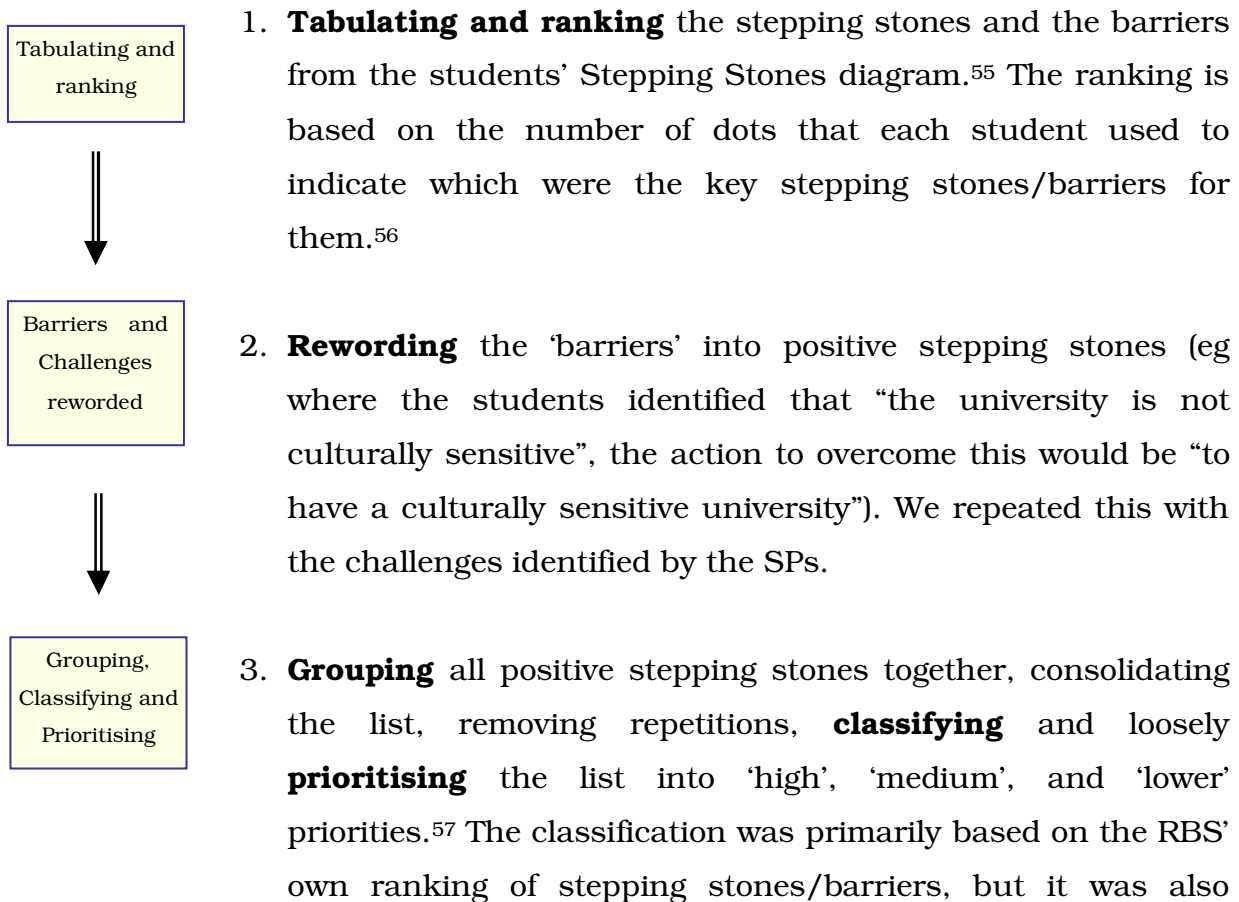
- **'Stepping stones' diagram** – RBSs each identified three goals they had at university. These goals were placed on the far-side of the 'river'. Together they then grouped the goals and identified six categories. RBSs were then asked to stand on the near-side of the 'river' and consider what are some of the stepping stones that help them reach their goals ('cross the river'). Each student was then given the opportunity to identify the four key stepping stones for them. They then repeated the exercise, identifying some of the barriers they experienced to achieving their goals (the 'crocodiles'). Due to the numerous barriers identified, the students decided to each identify five key barriers they faced (See Chart 2, p17).
- **Dinner**
- **Group knot** – to refocus them after the meal participants were asked to take part in a short interactive activity requiring them to work together to problem solve.
- **A 'Venn diagram'** – as a group, the RBSs were given circles depicting the SPs identified in the SP workshop. They were asked to place those services they used (or knew about) onto a large sheet, indicating whether the service was internal to the university or external. They then each marked the services they personally used with a 'dot' (see photos, p9 and Appendix 6, Tables 4 and 5). The participants were then given an opportunity to share:
 - what they felt were the positive and negative factors relating to each service
 - stories they had from using each service
 - how they thought each service could be improved
 - what other services they would like to see made available.

□ Stage I Analysis

Ideally, when using PAR, participants would do most of the analysis. However, due to considerable time pressures and the time constraints faced by the research team and participants, the research team undertook the Stage I analysis in order that Stage II workshop participants could quickly build on the results.

■ *Stepping Stones and Challenge Tree Analysis*

Our goal was to focus on positive action rather than identifying everything as a barrier or a challenge to achieving RBS goals. The steps we took to analyse the results of the Stage I workshops were:



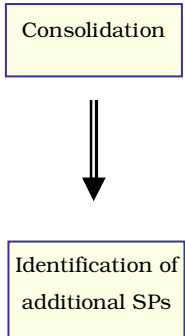
⁵⁵ See Appendix 6, Tables 4 and 5.

⁵⁶ We noted that some students did not use all the dots available to them, which can distort the ranking. It is not clear why this occurred.

⁵⁷ See Table 1, p18.

influenced by their conversations, as well as the SPs' challenge identification and related conversation.⁵⁸

■ *Service Provider Analysis*



Through the service provider analysis we **consolidated** the SP and RBS Venn Diagram exercises.

We also **identified additional service providers** that had not been named by either groups, but which we felt may be able to provide support to RBSs in the future. These decisions were based on the RBS' discussion in the workshop, for instance, some students indicated that it would be helpful to have a 'kiwi buddy'. We felt that there may be scope to involve Kiwi Connections, a volunteer friendship programme at the VUW that encourages the mutual exchange of cultures, provides support to international students as they adjust to their new environment, and establishes connections in the community.

From our service provider analysis we created two tables: *Service provider usages as indicated by refugee-background students* and *Service provider descriptions and refugee-background students comments*.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ We recognise that this has a degree of subjectivity, however, we are confident that it fairly represents the collective opinions of workshop participants. These results were put to Stage II participants for comment (see below).

⁵⁹ See Appendix 6, Tables 6 and 7.

Stage II

▣ Combined Refugee-Background Students/Service Provider Workshop

The goal of this workshop was to bring some of the RBS and SPs and together to build on the Stage I workshops and analysis, and to develop concrete actions for the future in line with the RBS' goals. As researchers we had been part of the Stage I journey, and had learnt from the participants throughout that journey, we also contributed our own ideas during workshop activities.

We faced a number of challenges in scheduling the combined workshop, including differing availability of students and SPs (during or after working hours / busy period in university for students), and the beginning of Ramadhan, which impacted on a number of our potential participants. In the end we scheduled the workshop in the morning for two hours (tea and coffee were provided for those who were not fasting). Unfortunately, this influenced the number of RBSs that could attend.

In total 10 people participated in the workshop:

- three researchers
- one co-researcher
- four SPs (including our sponsors)
- two SP/RBSs (however, one had to leave early).

The format of the combined workshop was:

- **Stage I review** – we collectively reviewed the Stage I workshops and analysis. The group discussed our write-up of the findings and provided feedback, ensuring that the analysis fairly represented the earlier workshops. In particular it was noted that RBS’ experiences may be influenced by friends’ experiences.

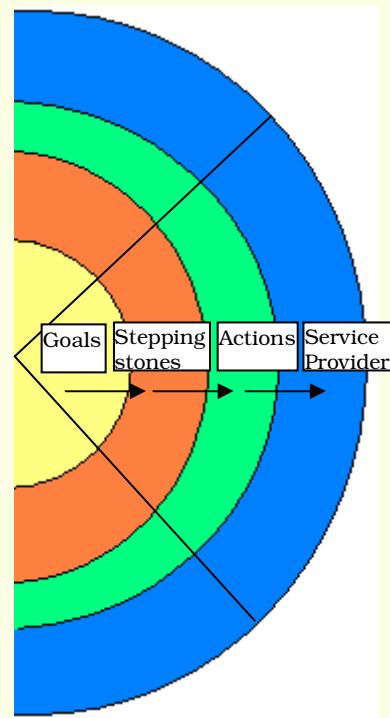
- **Bull’s-eye** - in order to develop concrete actions for the future we used a bull’s-eye diagram, adapted from emergency management planning training one of our research team had previously attended. This approach allowed us to quickly:

- align the university goals identified by the RBSs with the ‘stepping stones’
- develop actions related to those stepping stones
- identify the SPs who may be responsible (see Chart 4, p28).

Although we had intended to work in two groups, the discussion generated so much interest that the groups amalgamated. In the end, the participants were able to classify their suggested actions into three categories:

- Internal (Institutional)
- Internal (Individually-focussed)
- External.

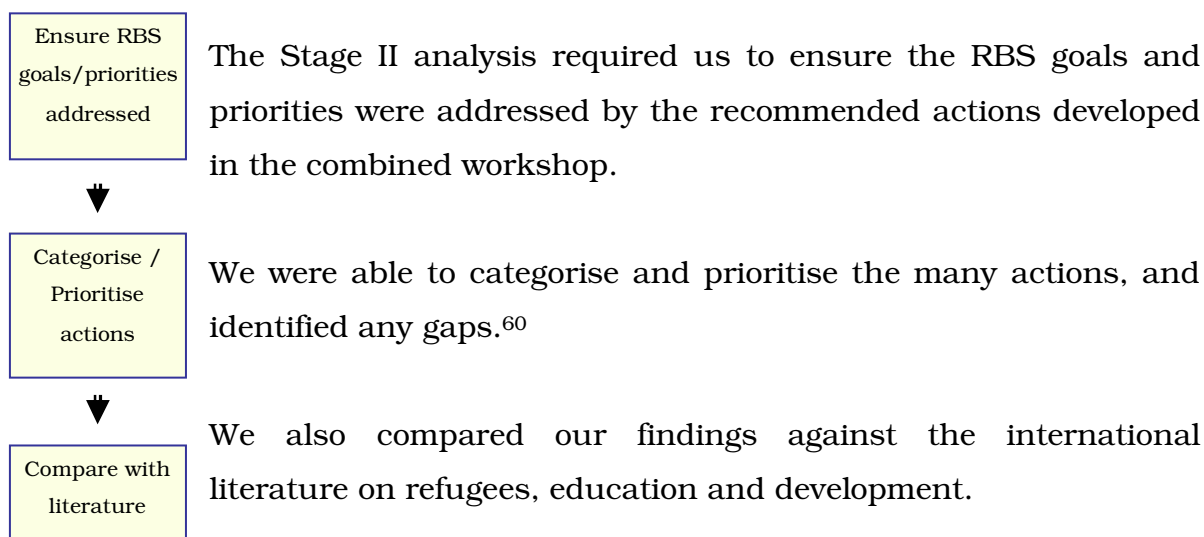
Bull’s-eye diagram



□ Stage II analysis

Our Stage II analysis occurred in two steps:

1. Development of preliminary recommendations for a presentation to stakeholders (researchers / co-researcher)
2. Finalisation of recommendations (researchers consulting with co-researcher and sponsors).



⁶⁰ See Recommendations, p34.

APPENDIX 4: ETHICS APPROVAL

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON
Te Whare Wananga o te Upoko o te Ika a Maui



HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE

Application for Approval of Research Projects

Please write legibly or type if possible. Applications must be signed by supervisor (for student projects) and Head of School

Note: The Human Ethics Committee attempts to have all applications approved within three weeks but a longer period may be necessary if applications require substantial revision.

1 NATURE OF PROPOSED RESEARCH:

(a) Student Research

(b) If Student Research MDS/Hons Course Code GEOG 404

(c) Project Title: Supporting Learning Needs of Students from Refugee Backgrounds at VUW

2 INVESTIGATORS:

(a) Principal Investigator

Name: Shana Khan

E-mail address: khanshan1@student.vuw.ac.nz

School of Geography, Environment & Earth Sciences

(b) Other Researchers

Name Position

Cedric Horner Co-researcher

Kathryn Paton Co-researcher

(c) Supervisor (in the case of student research projects)

Sara Kindon, Course Coordinator, SGEES, ext. 6194,
sara.kindon@vuw.ac.nz

3 DURATION OF RESEARCH

(a) Proposed starting date for data collection: **21 August 2006**

(Note: that NO part of the research requiring ethical approval may commence prior to approval being given)

(b) Proposed date of completion of project as a whole: **31 October 2006**

4 PROPOSED SOURCE/S OF FUNDING AND OTHER ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

(a) Sources of funding for the project

Please indicate any ethical issues or conflicts of interest that may arise because of sources of funding e.g. restrictions on publication of results

N/A

(b) Is any professional code of ethics to be followed **Y N X**

(c) Is ethical approval required from any other body **Y N X**

5 DETAILS OF PROJECT

Briefly Outline:

(a) The objectives of the project

To undertake participatory research with VUW students from refugee backgrounds and service providers of student support services in Wellington to:

- determine what support systems are available to refugee-background students at VUW
- document and analyse refugee-background students' experiences of these services, and at VUW more generally

- identify strategies and recommendations for service providers which will enable refugee-background students to be better supported within the university in the future.

The Project Sponsors are:

Rachel Ward

Changemakers' Refugee Forum

Judi McCallum

ESOL Access and Assessment Specialist

(b) Methods of data collection

- Informal interviews with service providers
- Participatory workshop activities with service providers
- Participatory workshop activities with VUW students from refugee backgrounds

(c) The benefits and scientific value of the project

- Recommendations from project are likely to bring about positive change in VUW support networks for students from refugee backgrounds.
- Work of Project Sponsors will be informed by the students from refugee backgrounds themselves.
- Researchers and co-researchers/participants (in particular students from refugee backgrounds) will develop skills in participatory research techniques and will hopefully be empowered by the process.

(d) Characteristics of the participants

- Students at VUW who have come from refugee backgrounds.
- Representatives of organisations who provide services to students and/or refugees within the Wellington region, but more specifically within VUW itself.

(e) Methods of recruitment

- Email and phone invitations to contacts provided by Project Sponsors – specifically refugee-background students and service providers.
- Personal invitations to and snowball method recruitment of refugee-background student networks (this may involve a notice in *Salient*).
- Email and phone invitations to service providers identified through secondary sources.

(f) Payments that are to be made/expenses to be reimbursed to participants

N/A

(g) Other assistance (e.g. meals, transport) that is to be given to participants

Refreshments during participatory workshops.

(h) Any special hazards and/or inconvenience (including deception) that participants will encounter.

No.

(i) State whether consent is for (delete where not applicable):

- (i) the collection of data
- (ii) attribution of opinions or information
- (iii) release of data to others
- (iv) use for a conference report or a publication
- (v) use for some particular purpose (specify)

Production of a group report for assessment as part of requirement for GEOG 404. This report will be the same as that submitted to the Project Sponsors (under iv).

Attach a copy of any questionnaire or interview schedule to the application

Appendix A – *Aide memoire* of topics to be included in informal interviews with service providers [NOT INCLUDED IN REPORT]

Due to the nature of the participatory workshop activities the questions/methods will be generated in collaboration with the participants. An update to this ethics application can be submitted once the precise topics/questions have been determined.

(j) How is informed consent to be obtained (see sections 4.1, 4.5(d) and 4.8(g) of the Human Ethics Policy)

(ii) the research is not anonymous but is confidential and informed consent will be obtained through a signed consent form (include a copy of the consent form and information sheet)

Y (See Appendices B-G)

(k) If the research will not be conducted on a strictly anonymous basis state how issues of confidentiality of participants are to be ensured if this is intended. (See section 4.1(e) of the Human Ethics Policy). (e.g. who will listen to tapes, see questionnaires or have access to data). Please ensure that you distinguish clearly between anonymity and confidentiality. Indicate which of these are applicable.

(i) access to the research data will be restricted to the investigators

Y N X

(ii) access to the research data will be restricted to the investigator and their supervisor (student research)

Y N X

(iii) all opinions and data will be reported in aggregated form in such a way that individual persons or organisations are not identifiable

Y X N

(iv) Other (please specify)

Whilst raw data and a final report will be presented to Project Sponsors at the conclusion of research, names of participants will not be included within the report linked to any particular statements

or comments. Participants will be asked to choose a pseudonym or be identified by more generic descriptors such as 'Representative from Organisation X' and 'Male, Somali, 3rd year student'.

Names of refugee-background students who take an active role in shaping the research questions and workshop activities will be named as researchers on the final report, but it will not be possible to connect specific content to any individual.

(l) Procedure for the storage of, access to and disposal of data, both during and at the conclusion of the research. (see section 4.12 of the Human Ethics Policy). Indicate which are applicable:

- (i) all written material (questionnaires, interview notes, etc) will be kept in a locked file and access is restricted to the investigator **Y N x**
- (ii) all electronic information will be kept in a password-protected file and access will be restricted to the investigator **Y N x**
- (iii) all questionnaires, interview notes and similar materials will be destroyed:
 - (a) at the conclusion of the research **Y N x**
 - or (b) 2 years after the conclusion of the research **Y x N**
- (iv) any audio or video recordings will be returned to participants and/or electronically wiped **N/A**
- (v) other procedures (please specify):

If data and material are not to be destroyed please indicate why and the procedures envisaged for ongoing storage and security.

During the research process the information generated will be stored in the office of our supervisor (Sara Kondon) within a locked filing cabinet. It will be available to the student researchers, Sara, and our Project Sponsors.

Raw data (devoid of any individual's details) and the project report will be presented to Project Sponsors at the conclusion of the project and they will then become responsible for ongoing storage. They have indicated that this material will be kept within their offices for two years as it may be used to inform other research and reports.

(m) Feedback procedures (See section 7 of Appendix 1 of the Human Ethics Policy). You should indicate whether feedback will be provided to participants and in what form. If feedback will not be given, indicate the reasons why.

Due to the participatory nature of the research, much of the analysis of data will occur during the research process providing ongoing feedback to a number of participants. Once the research is complete, it is proposed that a presentation will be given to those involved in the study as well as other possible stakeholders (such as funders). Otherwise reports can be issued to anyone who requests one on the consent form.

(n) Reporting and publication of results. Please indicate which of the following are appropriate. The proposed form of publications should be indicated on the information sheet and/or consent form.

- publication in academic or professional journals
- dissemination at academic or professional conferences
- provision of report and presentation to sponsoring organisations and participants and other stakeholders

This report will also be submitted for assessment as part of the requirements for GEOG 404.

Signature of investigators as listed on page 1 **(including supervisors) and Head of School.**

NB: All investigators and the Head of School must sign before an application is submitted for approval

.....
Date.....

.....
Date.....

.....
Date.....

.....
Date.....

Head of School:

.....

Date

.....

SGEES Human Ethics Officer

List of Appendices

- A. Service Provider Interview Aide Memoire [NOT INCLUDED IN FINAL REPORT]
- B. Service Provider Interviewee Consent Form [NOT INCLUDED IN FINAL REPORT]
- C. Service Provider Workshop Participant Consent Form
- D. Student Participant Consent Form
- E. Service Provider Interviewee Information Sheet [NOT INCLUDED IN FINAL REPORT]
- F. Service Provider Workshop Participant Information Sheet
- G. Student Participant Information Sheet

APPENDIX C

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON
Te Whare Wananga o te Upoko o te Ika a Maui



Service Provider Workshop Participant Consent Form

Research Project:

Supporting Learning Needs of Students from Refugee Background at Victoria University of Wellington.

Researchers:

Shana Khan, Kathryn Paton, Cedric Horner: Graduate Students, Geography of Development Studies Course, Victoria University of Wellington

Project Sponsors:

Rachel Ward (Changemakers' Refugee Forum)
Judi McCallum (ESOL)

Academic Supervisor:

Sara Kindon, Senior Lecturer, Geography, VUW.
Email: sara.kindon@vuw.ac.nz

I have received an explanation of this research project and had an opportunity to have any questions answered to my satisfaction. I understand that the purpose of the workshops' are to explore and collect personal and professional views, feelings, ideas, and recommendations which can be used to enhance the provision and delivery of supporting needs for the students from refugee backgrounds at VUW.

I understand that in participating:

- the information I provide will be used to inform a report for the Project Sponsors and VUW students from refugee backgrounds and that this report will also be submitted for assessment as part of the course requirements of GEOG 404.
- the report findings may be presented to interested stakeholders, such as government and NGO groups, and to academic audiences through journal publications or conferences.
- any information I provide will be treated confidentially in the final report and other presentations/articles emerging from this work. I, or my organisation, will not be identifiable in these publications.
- I agree to keep any information shared during the workshops confidential.
- the information you provide will be stored securely and only accessed by the Researchers, Project Sponsors, and Academic Supervisor named above to enable its use for further qualitative research, academic publications, and presentations. The data will be held for a period of two years and then destroyed.
- I can withdraw any information provided prior to the completion of data analysis by emailing or calling Sara Kindon directly: Sara.Kindon@vuw.ac.nz; Tel: 463-6194.
- If I have any questions I can contact Sara Kindon directly: Sara.Kindon@vuw.ac.nz; Tel: 463-6194 or Shana Khan: khanshan1@student.vuw.ac.nz

I would like to receive a copy of the report / Executive Summary (delete one) produced from this research. This can be sent to the following address:

Address: _____

I would like to receive an invitation to a presentation on the report findings.
This can be emailed to the following address:

Email: _____

Signature: _____ Date _____

Name: _____

APPENDIX D

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON
Te Whare Wananga o te Upoko o te Ika a Maui



Student Participant Consent Form

Research Project:

Supporting Learning Needs of Students from Refugee Background at Victoria University of Wellington

Researchers:

Shana Khan, Kathryn Paton, Cedric Horner: Graduate Students, Geography of Development Studies Course, Victoria University of Wellington

Project Sponsors:

Rachel Ward (Changemakers' Refugee Forum)
Judi McCallum (ESOL)

Academic Supervisor:

Sara Kindon, Senior Lecturer, Geography, VUW.
Email: sara.kindon@vuw.ac.nz

I have received an explanation of this research project and had an opportunity to have any questions answered to my satisfaction. I understand that the purpose of the research and participatory workshops are to explore and collect personal views, feelings, ideas, and recommendations which can be used to enhance the provision and delivery of support services for students from refugee backgrounds at VUW.

I understand that in participating:

- the information I provide will be used to inform a report for the Project Sponsors and VUW students from refugee backgrounds and that this report will also be submitted for assessment as part of the course requirements of GEOG 404.

- the report findings may be presented to interested stakeholders, such as government and NGO groups, and to academic audiences through journal publications or conferences.

- any information I provide will be treated confidentially in the final report and other presentations/articles emerging from this work. I will not be identifiable in these publications.

- I may choose to remain anonymous or use a nickname.

The nickname I would like to be used is: _____

- I agree to keep any information from the workshops confidential.

- the information I provide will be stored securely and only accessed by the Researchers, Project Sponsors, and Academic Supervisor named above to enable its use for further qualitative research, academic publications, and presentations. The data will be held for a period of two years and then destroyed.

- I can withdraw any information provided prior to the completion of data analysis by emailing or calling Sara Kindon directly: Sara.Kindon@vuw.ac.nz; Tel: 463-6194.

- If I have any questions or concerns I can contact Sara Kindon directly: Sara.Kindon@vuw.ac.nz; Tel: 463-6194 or Shana Khan: khanshan1@student.vuw.ac.nz

I would like to receive a copy of the report / Executive Summary (delete one) produced from this research. This can be sent to the following address:

Address: _____

I would like to receive an invitation to a presentation on the report findings. This can be emailed to the following address:

Email: _____

Signature: _____ Date _____

Name: _____

APPENDIX F

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON
Te Whare Wananga o te Upoko o te Ika a Maui



Service Provider Participant Information Sheet

Research Project:

Supporting Learning Needs of Students from Refugee Background at Victoria University of Wellington

Researchers:

Shana Khan, Kathryn Paton, Cedric Horner: Graduate Students, Geography of Development Studies Course, Victoria University of Wellington

Project Sponsors:

Rachel Ward (Changemakers' Refugee Forum)
Judi McCallum (ESOL)

Academic Supervisor:

Sara Kindon, Senior Lecturer, Geography, VUW.
Email: sara.kindon@vuw.ac.nz

Introduction:

Through various service providers and community workers within Wellington Region's refugee communities, there is a desire to better understand and meet the learning support needs of students from refugee backgrounds. VUW has a growing student body for which student learning support learning support services are provided.

At present little is known about students from refugee backgrounds enrolled at VUW or their specific learning support needs and there are no specific services targeted towards them.

Objective of project:

To work with VUW students from refugee backgrounds and service providers in order to determine what support systems are available to them, and how they can be better supported within the university in the future.

We will use participatory research methods to engage the students' ideas about how their needs can be better catered for. We will also conduct informal interviews and use participatory research methods in our research with service providers. We hope that the findings will complement and extend the work currently done by service providers.

Aim and scope of the workshop:

To explore service providers' understandings of the current provision of services to refugee-background students at VUW and generate ideas which can be used to enhance the provision and delivery of support services for these students.

Anticipated activities within the workshop:

- institutional mapping or diagramming of services provided to students from refugee backgrounds at VUW
- diagramming and ranking of issues faced by students from refugee backgrounds at VUW
- participatory assessment of the effectiveness of the current services in meeting needs
- visioning exercise to generate ideas for changes to improve learning support services

The workshop should take about one and a half hours and will take place within a suitable venue at VUW. You will be asked to keep any information

from the discussion confidential once you leave the room. The researchers will be present to facilitate discussion, participatory activities and to take notes. The maps/diagrams and notes generated from the associated discussion will be used to inform the report and will be included as being from 'Representatives of Organisations X Y and Z'. Any potentially identifying information in your comments will be disguised as much as possible.

Consent:

Before you can participate in this research you will be required to sign a Consent Form which will ask you to acknowledge that you understand the following:

- the information you provide will be used to inform a report for the Project Sponsors and VUW students from refugee backgrounds and that this report will also be submitted for assessment as part of the course requirements of GEOG 404.
- the report findings may be presented to interested stakeholders, such as government and NGO groups, and to academic audiences through journal publications or conferences.
- neither you and/or your organisation will be identified and that any information you provide will be treated confidentially in the final report and other presentations/articles emerging from this work.
- the information provided by yourself and/or your organisation will be stored securely and only accessed by the Researchers, Project Sponsors, and Academic Supervisor named above to enable its use for further qualitative research, academic publications, and presentations. The data will be held for a period of two years and then destroyed.
- you can withdraw any information provided by your organisation prior to the completion of data analysis by emailing or calling Sara Kindon directly: Sara.Kindon@vuw.ac.nz; Tel: 463-6194.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research or the information provided on this information sheet please contact Sara Kindon

directly: Sara.Kindon@vuw.ac.nz; Tel: 463-6194 or Shana Khan:
khanshan1@student.vuw.ac.nz

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this workshop. Your involvement will make a valuable contribution towards the goals of this project.

APPENDIX G

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON
Te Whare Wananga o te Upoko o te Ika a Maui



Student Participant Information Sheet

Research Project:

Supporting Learning Needs of Students from Refugee Background at Victoria University of Wellington

Researchers:

Shana Khan, Kathryn Paton, Cedric Horner: Graduate Students, Geography of Development Studies Course, Victoria University of Wellington

Project Sponsors:

Rachel Ward (Changemakers' Refugee Forum)
Judi McCallum (ESOL)

Academic Supervisor:

Sara Kindon, Senior Lecturer, Geography, VUW.
Email: sara.kindon@vuw.ac.nz

Introduction:

Through various service providers and community workers within Wellington Region's refugee communities, there is a desire to better understand and meet the learning support needs of students from refugee backgrounds. VUW has a growing student body for which student learning support learning support services are provided. At present little is known about students from refugee backgrounds enrolled at VUW or their specific learning support needs and there are no specific services targeted towards them.

Objective of project:

To work with VUW students from refugee backgrounds and service providers in order to determine what support systems are available to them, and how they can be better supported within the university in the future.

We will use participatory research methods to engage the students' ideas about how their needs can be better catered for. We will also conduct informal interviews and use participatory research methods in our research with service providers. We hope that the findings will complement the work currently done by service providers.

Aim and scope of the participatory research:

To explore the personal views, feelings, ideas, and recommendations of VUW students from refugee backgrounds, which can be used to enhance the provision and delivery of support services for all students from refugee backgrounds at VUW.

Anticipated scope of participatory research:

- issues you face at VUW
- services available to support you at VUW
- whether your learning support needs are being met
- effectiveness of the current services in meeting your needs
- changes would you like to see to improve learning support services for • refugee-background students at VUW.

Anticipated activities to support the participatory research:

- institutional mapping or diagramming of services provided to students from refugee backgrounds at VUW
- diagramming and ranking of issues faced by students from refugee backgrounds at VUW
- participatory assessment of the effectiveness of the current services in meeting needs

- visioning exercise to generate ideas for changes to improve learning support services

The workshops should take about one and a half hours and will take place within a suitable venue at VUW. You will be asked to keep any information from the discussion confidential once you leave the room. The researchers will be present to facilitate discussion, participatory activities and to take notes. The maps/diagrams and notes generated from the associated discussion will be used to inform the report and will be included as being from 'Representatives of Organisations X Y and Z'. Any potentially identifying information in your comments will be disguised as much as possible.

Consent:

Before you can participate in this research you will be required to sign a Consent Form which will ask you to acknowledge that you understand the following:

- the information you provide will be used to inform a report for the Project Sponsors and VUW students from refugee backgrounds and that this report will also be submitted for assessment as part of the course requirements of GEOG 404.
- the report findings may be presented to interested stakeholders, such as government and NGO groups, and to academic audiences through journal publications or conferences.
- any information you provide will be treated confidentially in the final report and other presentations/articles emerging from this work. You will not be identifiable in these publications.
- the information you provide will be stored securely and only accessed by the Researchers, Project Sponsors, and Academic Supervisor named above to enable its use for further qualitative research, academic publications,

and presentations. The data will be held for a period of two years and then destroyed.

- you can withdraw any information provided prior to the completion of data analysis by emailing or calling Sara Kindon directly: Sara.Kindon@vuw.ac.nz; Tel: 463-6194.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research or the information provided on this information sheet please contact Sara Kindon directly: Sara.Kindon@vuw.ac.nz; Tel: 463-6194 or Shana Khan: khanshan1@student.vuw.ac.nz

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research. Your involvement will make a valuable contribution towards the goals of this project.

APPENDIX 5: WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT PROFILES

Service Providers Workshop

- Five service provider (SP) participants from within the Victoria University of Wellington (VUW).
- Four SP participants from outside of the VUW.
- Two SP participants who are also VUW refugee-background students (RBS).
- Six females and three males.

Refugee-Background Student Workshop

- 13 student participants.
- Six females and seven males.
- Some mature RBSs.
- Only five RBSs had attended New Zealand high schools.
- None of the RBSs spoke English as a first language.
- The length of time the RBSs had spent in NZ was between 2.5 – 11 years.
- Two RBSs who were also SP participants.

Diagram 2: Study programmes of refugee-background students

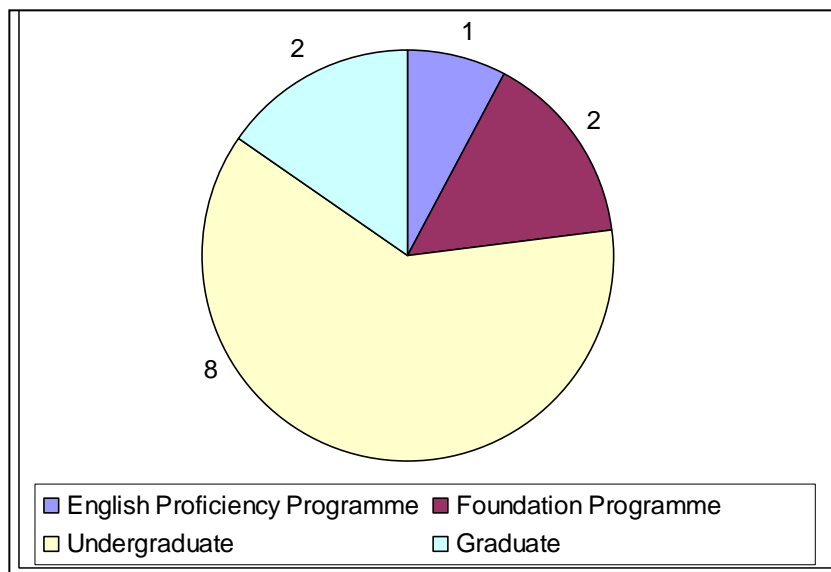
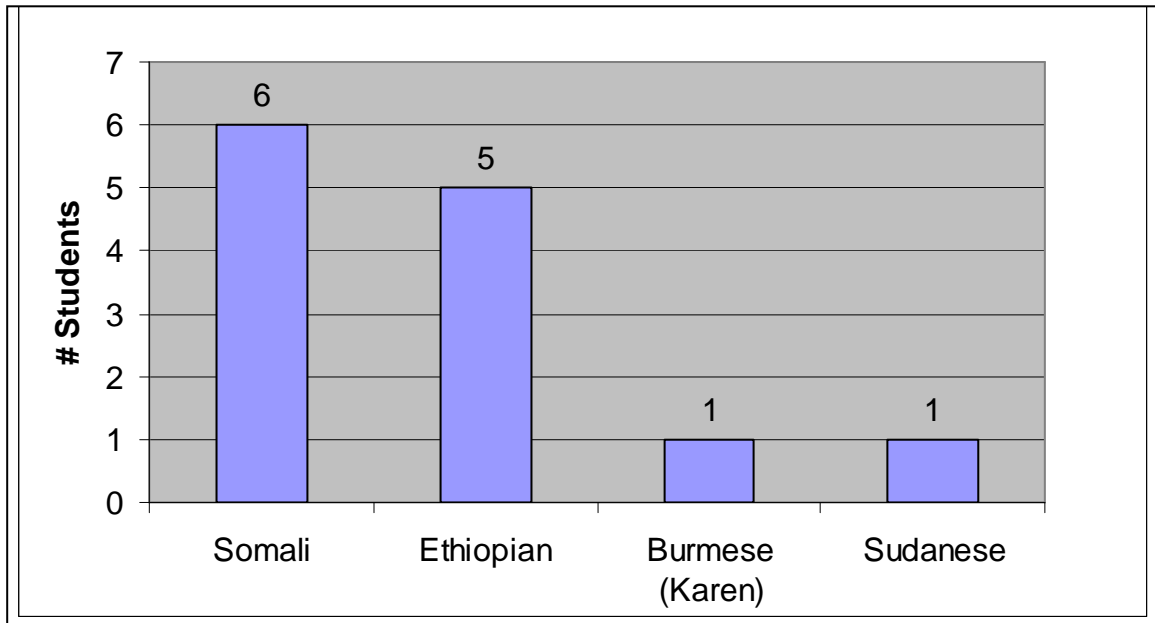


Diagram 3: Nationalities of refugee-background student participants



APPENDIX 6: ADDITIONAL DATA

Table 4: Refugee-background students ranking of ‘Stepping Stones’ to achieving their goals

Stepping Stone	# dots				
	EPP	FP	UP	GP	Total
Time management	0	2	3	2	7
Study groups	0	1	3	2	6
Placements	0	1	3	1	5
"Ethnic" lecturer (someone I can relate to)	0	0	2	2	4
Understanding tutor	0	1	3	0	4
Group assignments	1	1	2	0	4
Financial support	1	2	1	0	4
Guidance	0	0	3	0	3
Friends	0	0	1	1	2
Getting information	0	2	0	0	2
Good networks	0	0	0	1	1
Someone to inspire you	0	0	0	0	0

Table 5: Refugee-background students ranking of 'Barriers' to achieving their goals

Barriers	# of dots				
	EPP	FP	UP	GP	Total
The university is not culturally sensitive	0	1	9	1	11
Language	1	1	7	0	9
Lack of time management skills	0	2	4	2	8
Lack of motivation	0	1	4	2	7
Reading and writing academically	0	1	6	0	7
Workload	0	2	3	2	7
Stress, loneliness, lack of outside support	0	0	2	3	5
Lack of information available	0	0	2	2	4
Lack of family support	0	1	2	1	4
Style of communication	1	0	2	0	3
Hard to make friends	0	0	1	2	3
Lack of finances to study productively	0	1	2	0	3
Part-time work	0	0	1	1	2
Family commitments	0	0	1	0	1

Table 6: Service provider usage as indicated by refugee-background students

Service Provider	# of dots				
	EPP	FP	UP	GP	Total
Inside University					
University library	0	1	4	2	7
Islamic Club	0	1	4	1	6
Computer lab	0	1	2	2	5
Gym	0	1	3	1	5
Student Learning Support Centre	0	1	4	0	5
Student Health	0	1	2	1	4
Sports club	0	1	2	0	3
Student Finance	1	1	1	0	3
Arabic Club	0	0	2	0	2
Career Development	0	1	0	1	2
Counselling	1	0	0	1	2
Dancing group	0	0	2	0	2
English Proficiency Programme	1	1			2
Foundation Studies	0	2	0	0	2
VUWSA	0	0	1	0	1
Outside University					
Evolve	0	1	8	1	10
Evolve (African Foundation)	0	0	7	0	7
Community Law Centre	0	0	5	0	5
MSD – Studylink	0	0	4	1	5
Wellington City library	0	0	3	2	5
Wellington Somali Council	0	0	4	1	5
Changemakers Refugee Forum	0	1	2	0	3
Refugee Migrant Service	0	0	3	0	3
Wellington Peoples' Centre	0	0	1	0	1
Citizen Advice Bureau	0	1	0	0	1

Table 7: Service Provider descriptions and refugee-background comment on services

Service Provider	Description	Comments - Positive	Comments - Negative	Possible improvements
Inside University				
Arabic Club	Provides Arabic classes, teaching of the Quran and advice on Islamic teachings.			
Career Development	Victoria CareerHub - a web-based administration system that provides information about seeking job, career planning and graduate recruitment, career advice. Career Development also checks and edits CVs, provides interview skills, has a Careers Resource Library, does research on prospective employers, and has series of career publications covering a wide range of career issues. Free access to computers, cheap printing.			
Computer lab				
Counseling	Individual/group counselling; self-help resources and links to relevant websites; consultation regarding student issues or concerns (have specific Maori and International student counsellors); training programmes and workshops on initiatives such as Recognising and Supporting At Risk Students, one off workshops for schools or courses on topics such as Presenting Work Confidentially. (Identified by students - no further information provided)		The students who had used this service did not like the style - "white person" approach	
Dancing group				

English Proficiency Programme (EPP)	12-week courses, provides English Academic Preparation; acculturation to the university community; introduction to university learning resources; introduction to learning services like SLSC when required; pastoral care (when it impacts on academic learning); learning contracts; setting learning goals; giving academic advice after EPP complete.	Understanding tutors, speak slowly	Run a study grant introduction session at start of year
Foundation Studies	Intensive eight-month programme to give academic skills and English language practice to succeed in studies; University Entrance qualification, ongoing orientation, tutor system, student advisor pastoral care, referral to other services		Promote services more
Kiwi Connections	Volunteer friendship programme; encourages mutual exchange of cultures; provides support to international students as they adjust to their new environment and establishes connections in the community; Students / 'hosts' are matched at beginning of the year according to backgrounds and interests; sharing meals, attend concerts/sports events, celebrating holidays, etc. Hosts are Victoria alumni, employees, students and people from the Wellington community.		Students buddying with kiwis (some students don't like this idea).
Lecturers / Tutors	As per course of study.		Give positive feedback; give positive messages about refugees
Mature Students Network	Mature Students Network - hosts lunch networking meetings amongst mature students on Mondays & Wednesdays 12-1pm MR 1		Lecturers put down 'third world'

<p>Multicultural Friends and Families Club (MFFC)</p>	<p>Social and cultural club/ support network to help students from different cultural backgrounds, ethnicity, genders and ages adjust to the New Zealand lifestyle. It also plays an advocacy role for international students and ensures important issues are heard. The club works with VUWSA and Victoria International to provide basic information on living sensibly and comfortably in Wellington on a student budget, and a series of family friendly, inexpensive events and short trips around New Zealand for both international and local students.</p>			
<p>Muslim Students' Association (Islamic Club)</p>	<p>Provides prayer room, intermingling of Muslim and non-Muslim students, get-together for various 'Dawa' (congregation), accommodates students over night (especially those studying for exams), organises trips around New Zealand, supplies proper guidance for a good Muslim lifestyle. Peers assist other Muslims in assignments and with lectures notes.</p>			
<p>School of Linguistics and Applied Language</p>	<p>Academic writing programme (WRIT151) studies/writing in English as a Second Language, acculturation to expectations of academia</p>			
<p>Sport and Recreation Centre</p>	<p>Indoor spaces for table tennis, volleyball, badminton, netball, cricket, basketball, and a climbing wall. Outdoor spaces for rugby, ultimate, rugby league, touch, tennis, soccer, netball; two fitness centres; extensive group classes; sport equipment for hire; organised sports league; outdoor adventure excursions.</p>			
<p>Sports clubs</p>	<p>There are a number of university sports clubs (see www.vuwsa.org.nz)</p>			

Student Finance	Budget advice, student loan and allowance assistance by liaising with Studylink; preparation of financial statements for scholarship applications; emergency funds.	Some students felt that it was a good service, easy to access, good communication, nice doctors	Other students felt it was not a good service, unhelpful/not flexible.	Provide better information on available services
Student Health	Treatment for illnesses and/or injuries; guidance and management of chronic conditions (eg asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, mental health); medical assessment, including overseas training and examination; melanoma screening and minor surgery (for moles, lumps and bumps); consultation and support with sexual and reproductive health issues (e.g. STI checks (Sexually Transmitted Infections), cervical smears, contraceptive advice); specialist consultations (skin (dermatologist) and mental health services; free nutritional advice.	Some students felt that it was a good service, easy to access, good communication, nice doctors	Other students felt it was not a good service, unhelpful/not flexible.	Provide better information on available services
Student Learning Support Centre	One-on-one appointments, peer-writers, workshops (time management, note-taking, memory skills, study skills, academic writing, exam/revision, maths/statistics, academic speaking, plus post-graduate seminars) grammar, academic speaking, Preparation for Academic Life and Study (PALS) for undergraduate non-English speaking background students, Peer Assisted Study Support (PASS, voluntary study groups in core 100-level courses), conversation. SLSC also runs specific programmes for Maori and Pacific students.	Some people are supportive	Some people are difficult to deal with; don't spend time with you; hard to book; students do not relate to the study approach (students come from oral tradition)	Provide better information on services available; one-on-one assistance should be at least half an hour (students had experienced less); study groups; use different techniques for students from oral backgrounds; courses in managing time

<p>University Library</p>	<p>Place for study, books, computers, audiovisual suitelibrary tours, tutorials on ways to use library research tools, additional guides on how to use the library (bibliographies, internet search, cite catalogues, do endnote and so on), online forms to seek any library assistance, and services for teaching staff. Distance Study Support provides library services to students eligible to study by distance. Language Learning Centre (Chinese, Japanese, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Maori and Samoan and other worlds' language such as Hindi and Khmer, Afrikaans, Hebrew and Arabic).</p>			
<p>University Teaching Development Centre</p>	<p>Assists in improving the quality and effectiveness of the education that students receive at VUW, through provision of professional development in teaching, research into higher education, course and teaching evaluations and other practical services.</p>			
<p>VUW Enrolment Office</p>	<p>Processes enrolment forms, etc.</p>			

VUWSA	<p>Mediators, food bank, advocacy and support for students with Studylink or WINZ issues; Student Hardship Fund; Women's Room; Campus Angels to drop you home at night; supports clubs (provide grants, supply office resources and assistance, present achievement awards, making meeting rooms available, supply cheap rental vehicles and BBQ materials to hire for fundraising); provides 200 carparking spaces/ lockers for students; free bus tickets to and from Pipitea, Te Aro and Karori campuses; Student Job Search; microwaves to warm foods; and fortnightly magazine named Salient.</p>			<p>Ethnic club for "refugee-background students"; promote good image of refugees, hold an ongoing study group for study grant recipients</p>
Outside University				
Changemakers Refugee Forum	<p>Migrant, Refugee, Community services and information - provide training opportunities, collected advocacy for issues facing refugee-background communities</p>			
Citizen Advice Bureau	<p>Do not provide specific advice to refugee-background people/students but people from a refugee background use their services frequently. Provide general advice on Tenancy problems, employment issues, immigration/citizenship, consumer advice. Produce information in a wide range of languages - but not necessarily those from the countries where refugees tend to come from (although they do have Arabic). Appointments do not have to be made. Central branch of the CAB is open until 7.15 pm</p>		<p>One person had heard of it, but nobody had used it.</p>	

<p>Community Law Centre</p>	<p>Wellington Community Law Centre offers: a range of free legal advice sessions to help those who cannot access other legal services. Sessions are staffed by qualified lawyers who volunteer at the Law Centre; a range of legal education to the community including law related to refugees and migrants, family, mental health, domestic violence and harassment, employment, privacy, immigration, ACC, youth, crime, tenancy, consumers; a number of legal information resources and publications with the aim to inform and educate the community about their legal rights and obligations.</p>			
<p>ESOL Assessment and Access Specialist Service</p>	<p>Provide free personalised needs assessment and advice for speakers of English as a second language, and advice on courses, providers and support services available, study grants (fees) for English language (academic) and foundation studies.</p>			
<p>Evolve (including African Club)</p>	<p>Located in Wellington CBD, open for at least five hours a day, Monday to Friday. Medical, employment advice, hangout space (10-25 years), project/workshop. In the evenings Evolve is used for other activities such as a practice for its multi-cultural kapa haka group.</p>	<p>Evolved received extensive positive feedback - students were very comfortable going there.</p>	<p>It is not for people over 25, therefore, those mature students realised they didn't have a similar kind of hangout space.</p>	
<p>Ministry of Education</p>	<p>"Families Learning Together" - a series of booklets in a range of languages to help refugee and migrant families understand aspects of schooling in New Zealand. They also provide guidance on how to support your children's learning at home.</p>			

MSD – Studylink	<p><i>Pre-study:</i> information and tools (including www.studylink.govt.nz) on financing your study, presentations in highschoools. <i>During study:</i> student allowance (including possibility of 'limited fulltime study' status for those who cannot study fulltime for a good reason), student loan, scholarships for certain subjects.</p>		<p>Students (and many SPs) did not know about 'limited full time study' possibility. From their experience, students felt Studylink staff are "like computers"/ rude and inefficient.</p>	
Refugee Migrant Service	<p>Aotearoa-New Zealand's refugee resettlement agency; services include: advice, information and advocacy; crisis intervention and home-based family support programmes; community orientation; community linkages and referrals services; volunteer training, deployment and support.</p>			
Tertiary Education Commission	<p>Provider of refugee study grants.</p>			<p>More tertiary funding and scholarships</p>
Wellington City Council	<p>Migrant & Refugee Work Experience Programme; Ethnic Forums for ethnic communities and Wellington City Council to share ideas and information; an Ethnic Communities Advisor works to develop positive relationships between ethnic communities, the Council, government agencies, community organizations and individuals; an interpreting service to improve communication between ethnic communities and the Council; the Council has established a framework to improve intercultural relationships in Wellington.</p>			

Wellington City Library	<p>Website has a migrant language friendly portals - offers links to information and cultural activities. Several important refugee groups/languages are included: Assyrian, Arabic, Khmer, Somali, Farsi. Library staff provide any assistance required to non-English speakers.</p>			
Wellington Peoples' Centre	<p>A membership-based organisation concerned with wellbeing of Wellingtonians on low incomes, experienced in serving refugee-background residents. Provide counselling, health and dental services. People can join for \$2.50 per week. For non-members they offer advocacy and advice for workers rights and benefit entitlements. They run a social English group - popular sessions which focusses on conversational english in a relaxed environment. 1.30 pm to 3.30 pm Mondays.</p>			
Wellington Somali Council	<p>High School Homework Club (and also some university students), advocacy youth leadership activities, cultural celebrations</p>			

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