



# The Contribution of Non-Government Organisations to the Settlement of Refugees and Migrants in Aotearoa New Zealand



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Report prepared for the  
National Association of  
ESOL Home Tutors

June 2008

## Acknowledgements

NGOs are almost by definition organisations working under the pressure of limited resources and great aspirations, leading to constant demands on the time of their key personnel. The author therefore wishes to express deep appreciation of the time that staff of the NGOs participating in this project have given to provide information, documentation and interviews. They were Dr Mary Dawson, Auckland Regional Migrant Services Trust; Adam Awad and Sue Driver, ChangeMakers Refugee Forum; Felicité Jardine and Shirley Wright, Christchurch Resettlement Services; Peter Cotton, Jenni Broom and Jude Walcott, RMS Refugee Resettlement; Claire Szabó, Ruth Hubscher and Grace Bassett, National Association of ESOL Home Tutors; Julia Castles, ESOL Home Tutors (South Auckland); Kerry Dalton and BJ Eydt, New Zealand Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux; Rebecca Fraser, Hamilton Multicultural Services Trust; Pauline Harper, Volunteer Wellington; Rattan Prakash, New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils. Thanks also go to Elizabeth Clements, for information on the Volunteer Wellington/ ChangeMakers Refugee Forum mentoring initiative; to Dr Ute Walker and Professor Cynthia White, Massey University School of Language Studies for their support and advice; and to Dr Andrew Trlin, for his interest, very helpful comments and advice.

# Executive summary

An Executive Summary has been produced as a separate document and is available from the website of the National Association of ESOL Home Tutors, [www.esolht.org.nz](http://www.esolht.org.nz).

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# 1. Introduction

Migration has always been vital to New Zealand's development and the arrival of strangers on our shores presents no new situation for us. In recent years however, complexities have been added to this picture, and it is not surprising that the attention of many agencies concerned with the promotion of social cohesion has now turned to the question of how to increase the chances of successful settlement for refugees and migrants.

Changes brought about by the 1991 Immigration Amendment Act, coinciding as they did with a worldwide increase in the mobility of people in a globalised economy, resulted in the migration to these shores of higher numbers of people from non-English speaking backgrounds, especially from Asian countries, than had ever been the case before. At the same time source countries for refugees accepted under New Zealand's quota system (and the family members who joined them later) diversified markedly. For the 10 years from 1979 to 1989, refugees had been accepted from just three countries, all in South East Asia. In the following nine years, refugees came from 35 countries spread over four continents (Altinkaya & Omundsen, 1999, pp. 32-33). While immigration always requires adaptation within the host and the migrant community, the challenge for both to do so was higher in view of the greater social distance between New Zealand and many of these countries of origin, the added dimension of language difficulties and in many cases the lack of a sizeable existing community in New Zealand from the same source to assist the host community in understanding needs.

In the early years of this diversification and expansion of immigration during the 1990s, the Immigration Service often appeared to see its role more as gate-keeper than settlement agency: the *immigration policy* was not balanced by an *immigrant policy* concerned with post-arrival settlement needs (Trlin, 1993, cited in White, Watts, & Trlin, 2001, p. 2). In the more complex new environment, gaps in service provision appeared as new challenges emerged, and it was often non-government organisations (NGOs) already working in the field, or set up in response to demand, which recognised the challenges and embraced the task of developing new programmes to support migrants and refugees in their passage from newcomer to settled New Zealander. An increasingly sophisticated set of programmes, within the limits of the not-for-profit sector, were established. These were years in which, in general, a contracting environment was causing considerable change in the voluntary sector (Tennant, 2007, p. 193), with a climate of growing accountability in terms of both service provision and financial arrangements, especially for that part of the funding which increasingly came from government sources. Settlement NGOs were no exception, and quality control processes featured strongly in these new developments. For example, from the early 1990s, the National Association of ESOL Home Tutors (ESOL HT) established a national office, designed a national training course for its volunteers, along with national training for trainers, targeted resources and moderation to support it, gained accreditation from the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) for the course, established a system of national accountability for financial expenditure in response to a new funding contract with the Ministry of Education, and developed systems to support the governance and management of the organisation at local and national levels.

## A cross-sectoral focus on settlement

In the new century, however, the focus of government departments has turned increasingly to the post-arrival period and the importance of successful settlement as a vital aspect of immigration policy and contributor to the three priority areas the government has identified, economic transformation, families – young and old – and national identity (Department of Labour, 2007a, p. 9). A process of cross-sectoral consultation took place, led by the Department of Labour, but including officials from Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Economic Development, the Office of Ethnic Affairs, and other government agencies. Other sectors consulted were ethnic communities, local government, NGOs with a role in settlement and economic development agencies, in recognition that one of the barriers to achieving good settlement outcomes had been “a lack of national coordination and information sharing among those working in the settlement area” (Department of Labour, 2004, p. 1). The result was the New Zealand Settlement Strategy, launched in 2004 and revised in 2007, described as “a whole-of-government framework to achieve agreed settlement outcomes for migrants, refugees and their families” (Department of Labour, 2007b, p. 3), and a series of action plans at national and regional level. The Settlement National Action Plan was launched in 2007, assigning tasks to support the strategy across all the sectors involved in the consultation process. The Auckland Regional Settlement Strategy was promulgated in 2006 and a draft Wellington Regional Settlement Strategy and accompanying action plan in early 2008. The process was extended throughout key settlement areas in New Zealand through the Settlement Support initiative, again established on a cross-sectoral basis, with the dual focus of “better coordinated provision of advice and information to migrants and refugees” and “more responsive mainstream services for migrants and refugees at the local level” (Wallis & Sankar, 2006, p. 3). In these key settlement areas, Settlement Support Coordinators have been appointed.

Following on from a series of community meetings held around the country, in 2007 the Ministry of Social Development launched another initiative concerned with growing diversity in New Zealand society, Connecting Diverse Communities, “a whole-of-government approach designed to improve and better coordinate initiatives across government agencies to promote social cohesion and stronger relationships between diverse ethnic, cultural and religious communities” (Ministry of Social Development, n.d.). Once again, this represents a new approach to the increasing cultural diversity within New Zealand, “the first time that government agencies have developed a whole-of-government approach to improving social cohesion” (Ministry of Social Development, n.d.).

NGOs have welcomed this strategic overview, the increased information-sharing it has brought, and the allocation of budgetary resources to the area. It is in this climate that this report has been prepared. The clear intent of the New Zealand Settlement Strategy and Settlement National Action Plan is for collaboration among service providers in all sectors. Over the years of their operation, settlement NGOs have developed an expertise based on grassroots contacts as lean but responsive organisations which have been dedicated to keeping their ears to the wind for emergent problems in an ever-changing situation, and implementing and evaluating solutions to them. However, there is no comprehensive document which examines the scope and impact of the NGO contribution. While this report cannot lay claims to comprehensiveness, in view of the very large number of NGOs which have an effect on different aspects of settlement, it is hoped that it will go some way to filling the gap. The process of collaboration and coordination that has been implemented through the strategies described above has as one of its aims the avoidance of unnecessary duplication of services, and to achieve that it is important that the work of the smaller agencies and the manner in which they contribute to identified settlement outcomes are made visible.

## The study

This report was commissioned by the National Association of ESOL Home Tutors (ESOL HT) with funding from the Ministry of Social Development. It has been developed by means of a document analysis of a range of material produced by the participant organisations and interviews with key personnel of the organisations, as well as consultation of government documents relating to current approaches to settlement, and the wider literature concerned with immigration issues in Aotearoa New Zealand.

## Participants

Nine NGOs have participated in the study. The process of selection involved an initial approach to all active members of the Settlement NGOs Networking Group, which meets regularly to coordinate activity and share information at a national level, and from there a 'snowballing' method led to approaches to other organisations which filled particular gaps. Of the organisations approached, one declined because of pressures of time, and three others did not respond. Although the sample is limited, it covers a range of features important within the sector (see Table 1). It includes agencies whose primary focus is on settlement issues (e.g. ESOL HT, RMS Refugee Settlement – RMS) and organisations with a more universal brief but who have responded to a changing New Zealand demographic in ways that have been very inclusive of migrants (New Zealand Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux -- CAB, Volunteer Wellington); agencies with a national focus (e.g. RMS, CAB) and agencies which are operating in a single region (e.g., Auckland Regional Migrant Services Trust – ARMS, Hamilton Multicultural Services Trust – HMST); agencies which have grown out of a host community response (e.g. ESOL HT, RMS) and agencies which have grown from a migrant or refugee background response (New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils – NZFEC, ChangeMakers Refugee Forum -- ChangeMakers); organisations of long-standing (e.g. ESOL HT) and of recent development (e.g. ChangeMakers and ARMS); organisations that provide the bulk of their services through trained volunteers (e.g. CAB) and organisations where delivery is largely by paid professionals (e.g. Christchurch Resettlement Services -- CRS); and very large organisations (e.g. CAB, with 91 service locations, and ESOL HT, the largest NGO with a specific settlement focus, with 23) and small organisations (e.g. ChangeMakers, with a single office and a handful of paid staff).

**Table 1. Participating NGOs**

	Scope	Began	Service	Type
Auckland Regional Migrant Services Trust (ARMS)	R	2003	P	H
ChangeMakers Refugee Forum (ChangeMakers)	R	2003	P	E
Christchurch Resettlement Services (CRS)	R	1991	P	H
New Zealand Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB)	N (91)	1970	V/P	H
ESOL Home Tutors (ESOL HT)	N (23)	1970s	V/P	H
Hamilton Multicultural Services Trust (HMST)	R	1999	P	E/H
New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils (NZFEC)	N (17)	1989	V	E
RMS Refugee Resettlement (RMS)	N (9)	1975	V/P	H
Volunteer Wellington	R	1992	V	H

R= regional, N= national, with number of regional branches in brackets; P= service largely provided by paid staff, V= service largely provided by volunteers; H= developed largely from host community initiative; E= ethnic community led



Given these limitations, it is hoped that the study is to some degree representative of others within the NGO sector who are contributing to this work, can give a glimpse of the depth and range of activity in the sector, and can investigate its credentials to undertake it. The participants acknowledged the significant contribution of numbers of other NGOs, such as Refugees as Survivors in Auckland and in Wellington and PEETO in Christchurch. A regrettable absence is of organisations with a focus on Pacific Island migrant settlement. Although all of the participants, apart from those restricted to refugee work, provide a service to Pasifika people, it would have been valuable to have included an account of how services developed within the Pasifika community in response to its cultural imperatives and preferences contribute to these goals. The importance of and demand for such services is firmly acknowledged. Unfortunately, the limited time for the research project did not allow for approaching further NGOs to fill this gap after it became clear that the first organisations approached would not be able to participate.

There are, too, groups with less formal constitution or more peripheral involvement whose contributions are nevertheless important to the process. Among the former are ethnic communities. As the New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils (2004) report on volunteering asserts, volunteering among migrant communities is often carried out through personal networks rather than NGOs, but its contribution is of great value to settlement outcomes. Other groups whose voluntary work supports settlement include, for example, many church congregations who welcome migrants, include them in their activities and provide pastoral care and informal English groups for them.

## Methodology

Gathering of the documents from participant NGOs which were to be analysed for the first stage of this report began in early 2008. Documentation has included that produced for the public, such as service brochures and Annual Reports, but also internally focused newsletters and evaluations of service. It has provided a comprehensive view of the activities of the organisations, supplemented in most cases by website information. A sample list of publications provided by each organisation is to be found in Appendix One.

The intended methodology for the research was to begin with the analysis of this documentation using a framework derived from notions of settlement and social cohesion. This would then be sent back to a key member(s) of staff allowing them to read it and to check whether they were in agreement with the representation of the service that it revealed. This process was to be followed by an interview with the staff members where they could discuss the analysis, and correct or supplement it in response to the categories that had been used. In several cases, however, participants requested an initial interview to describe their service prior to presentation of the documents, and so in these cases the process was reversed, but in all cases, the document analysis was presented back for checking. In two cases, staff absence from work prevented follow-up interviews, but they were able to give e-mailed responses to the analysis.

The interviews were driven by the respondents' choices about how to describe their service, or respond to the analysis they had previously read. One other question was added to the process, asking what they saw as the characteristics of an effective partnership with a government department. Four of the interviews were recorded and partially transcribed, but in other cases, especially where the procedural order had been reversed, staff preferred a less formal "discussion",

and extensive notes were taken instead. The interview comments were interwoven with the initial analysis, enriching the descriptions of the services.

The absence of primary investigation of migrant and refugee clients' views must be seen as a limitation. There are however indirect indicators of recognised value, for example, in the fact that the services are heavily used and in some cases over-subscribed, and from time to time the voices of users have been quoted. As these comments come from material prepared by the services, it must be acknowledged that they are likely to have chosen particularly enthusiastic clients.

## What is settlement?

In order to proceed with the analysis of documents, it was necessary to develop a notion of what settlement might involve. It is a complex notion with many strands, some of them in potential conflict with each other (Spoonley, Peace, Butcher, & O'Neill, 2005), but the recent process of wide national consultation suggested that a significant source should be the official view of settlement goals presented in the New Zealand Settlement Strategy documents themselves. The revised New Zealand Settlement Strategy contains seven intermediate-level goals. They are that

*Migrants, refugees and their families:*

- *are accepted and respected by host communities for their diverse cultural backgrounds and their community interactions are positive;*
- *obtain employment appropriate to their qualifications and skills and are valued for their contribution to economic transformation and innovation;*
- *become confident using English in a New Zealand setting or are able to access appropriate language support;*
- *access appropriate information and responsive services that are available in the wider community;*
- *form supportive social networks and establish a sustainable community identity;*
- *feel safe within the wider community in which they live;*
- *accept and respect the New Zealand way of life and contribute to civic, community and social activities.* (Department of Labour, 2007a, p. 11, italics in the original)

The Settlement National Action Plan (Department of Labour, 2007b) provides a further picture of how these goals might be achieved by establishing more micro-level actions to achieve the goals. Both these documents are quoted throughout the report to indicate how the programmes of the NGOs contribute to this vision.

The focus of the Connecting Diverse Communities project was the concept of social cohesion, the subject of the community meetings that the Ministry of Social Development held around New Zealand in 2006. They identify the areas with "the greatest potential for strengthening relations between diverse communities" as:

- strengthening intercultural relationships
- addressing discrimination and promoting respect
- improving connections with cultural identity
- capacity building and community development
- building the knowledge base. (Ministry of Social Development, n.d.)

The Ministry website also contains a discussion of the concept of social cohesion which draws partly on the work of Canadian social theorist, Jane Jenson (1998). Her model identifies five aspects, belonging, participation, inclusion, legitimacy and recognition. It has been discussed and developed further for a New Zealand context by Spoonley et al. in a 2005 article which examines each of the five notions and indicates what aspects of personal, community and national life might contribute to it, noting the importance of both material and subjective dimensions. These more abstract notions have proved useful to the analysis in this project, too, as they capture some of the less tangible contributions to a sense of being settled within a society. As RMS (2006) puts it, “we may like to think of resettlement as a ‘process’ but belonging in a new country is a feeling.”

Another resource which proved useful in considering what settlement might mean in the New Zealand context and where a supportive service might be required was a report commissioned by the New Zealand Immigration Service into the settlement assistance needs of recent migrants (Ho, Cheung, Bedford, & Leung, 2000).

The NGO documents were therefore analysed looking for indications of how the services provided reflected the perspectives identified in these key sources. Inevitably themes also presented themselves in terms of what was important to the service providers themselves, the aspects of the programmes that they emphasised, or the circumstances of their client group that they took special account of in their design of the programmes. The alignment between these sets of themes was then examined. Another aspect that seemed important to consider was structures that supported and maintained the quality of provision, since vulnerability on that score would seriously undermine the value of the service.

Results are presented in the report as contributions at three levels of operation:

- local service provision – client services to individuals, groups, families, and the host community
- regional services – advocacy and collaboration at a regional level
- national networks – national office and interagency development and support of best practice, advocacy, policy and research.

## Refugees and migrants in Aotearoa New Zealand

Before presenting the findings of this analysis, it is important to take a moment to consider who the people targeted by the New Zealand Settlement Strategy are. It is a very diverse group. In recent years, the intake of migrants, refugees and their families to New Zealand has been about 50,000 per year, of whom about 50% are skilled and business migrants, 30% family sponsorship and 10% humanitarian (Department of Labour, 2007a, p. 7). All migrants are faced with some process of adjustment to new conditions, but the difference in level of need for support between a native English-speaking skilled migrant and a pre-literate refugee who has experienced deep trauma in a

war-torn country of different language, culture and economy from New Zealand is obvious. However, even some of those who have come to New Zealand under the refugee quota are highly educated people who may resent a picture that does not take account of their strengths and ability to contribute, as well as their need for support in some areas. Likewise, some of those with very high needs may also be supporting others towards being able to live independently, for example, by providing childcare at home while other members of the family work. The desire not to be seen merely as recipients of support came through a number of the documents (e.g., MacGibbon & Greenaway, 2004). As Claire Szabó, CEO of ESOL HT put it:

There's quite a simplistic dichotomy between economic transformation and social support. Clearly those two things aren't existing in one population and not the other. Everybody's contribution to New Zealand and their independence contributes both to their own social needs and the country's economy.

While organisations such as CAB and Volunteer Wellington provide a service accessed by New Zealanders of all origins, including the full range of newcomers and migrants of longer standing, the clients of most of the NGOs in this study are of non-English speaking background. In view of the diversity among this group, it is hardly surprising that the services offered by these NGOs to support them come in many shapes and sizes.

## 2. Service provision at the local level

### 2.1 Access to information and services

In their research into the settlement needs of recent migrants, Ho et al. (2000) identified four main areas of need: everyday needs, learning English (for those who are not competent or native speakers), employment and supportive connections. The next four sections will look at ways in which NGOs contribute to settlement in each of those areas, beginning with the question of access to information and services to allow people to conduct their everyday lives, which can be seen as fundamental to all other aspects of settlement. It is signalled in the New Zealand Settlement Strategy as a matter of equity. One of the high level goals is:

Migrant and refugee families have equitable access to the support and choices they need to be secure and able to reach their full potential in all aspects of social and economic life;

which links to an intermediate-level goal that migrants and their families should “access appropriate information and responsive services that are available in the wider community” (Department of Labour, 2007a, p. 11). Spoonley et al. (2005) see this as an aspect of inclusion.

In our society there is a wide range of services available that could potentially contribute to a newcomer's sense of security within the community and ability to flourish as a member of it. However, there are also a number of potential hurdles to easy access. First of all it is necessary to know that the service actually exists. It is then necessary to recognise its connection to the migrant's personal circumstances, to see that it is a relevant service. At this point contact needs to be initiated and one's intent and need communicated. The response of the service provider personnel needs to be understood and a decision made about whether or not to accept the service. Throughout all this there needs to be a process of managing the interaction with the provider, which might mean asserting one's rights, or overcoming a misunderstanding of one's circumstances. It is clear that throughout this process there are likely to be both linguistic and cross-cultural complexities, especially for those whose country of origin and recent experience bears very little resemblance to New Zealand society. Eliminating one barrier (providing information about the existence of the service) may still leave significant hurdles to be overcome.

Each of the NGOs in the study is active in some way in assisting migrants and refugees to gain access to the information and services that they need, but they do so in a range of different ways, from providing specialised targeted services to adapting the delivery of existing services which are provided for a general clientele so that they are welcoming of and responsive to migrants and refugees, to mediating migrants' approaches to general service providers in a range of ways.

#### Providing targeted services

In some cases, the needs of newcomers are so specific that merely to connect them to existing services would not be equitable since the service would not meet their needs. A key example of this is mental health and social work services for refugees. Refugees have inevitably experienced considerable

trauma, multiple loss and unwilling separation from their country and culture of origin. Post-traumatic mental health and other settlement difficulties are therefore strongly indicated, especially since New Zealand has a policy of accepting particularly complex at-risk cases. ChangeMakers (2007) explains:

These include women raped, women with a large number of children, fractured families and very traumatised children. They need intensive support services. (p.2)

Refugees may be unwilling or unable to use general services because of different cultural perceptions, such as cultural stigma towards mental health issues and different beliefs about appropriate service, as well as practical issues such as language barrier and transport difficulties (Fraser, 2007, p. 4). Culturally appropriate specialist services are therefore preferred, and these have been established by Refugees as Survivors in Auckland and Wellington, and by one of the participants in this research, CRS, in Christchurch. The service that CRS provides uses multi-skilled, multi-ethnic teams of professionally qualified paid, and typically very experienced, staff (including cross-cultural workers) working together for each family or individual. The CRS 2007 Annual Report lists the following areas of activity:

individual and family relationship counselling and support; mental health assessment, intervention and support; domestic violence work; practical assistance with resettlement tasks. (p. 6).

Where appropriate, this service is carried out in people's homes.

The specially targeted service that CRS provides also extends to other aspects of health, such as health promotion delivered by trained peer educators from the refugee communities in their first language focusing on the specific needs of people unfamiliar with ways of maintaining health in a cold climate, an urban setting and with a new diet, covering topics such as keeping warm in winter, child safety and diabetes. There is a "focus on promoting good health and access to good health opportunities – in the widest sense" (CRS Annual Report, 2007, p. 6) and a "participatory community development/ health promotion model of service delivery" (p. 15).

In other centres, specialist social work is provided for refugees by RMS paid professional staff.

### **'First-stop shops'**

In the recent period of greater coordination and collaboration, one prominent type of service targeted to the special needs of migrants, is the 'first-stop shop' migrant resource centre, in response to the potential for confusion where new arrivals are faced with navigating an unfamiliar city, often in an unfamiliar language, to locate perhaps interrelated services. These are to be found, under a variety of titles, in the major recipient communities of Auckland, Hamilton and Wellington, where a number of settlement agencies operate from one set of premises, thus enabling migrants to make enquiries and act on referrals to other services in a single visit.

From two locations in the region which receives over 50% of all migrants and refugees to New Zealand, Auckland Regional Migrant Services Trust (ARMS) offers an array of services of importance to new settlers, including information, individual consultations on complex settlement-related issues, referrals to other agencies, informational workshops on vital settlement issues such as employment, education and life in New Zealand, and orientation tours for new arrivals. There are also regular forums, which give refugees and migrants the opportunity to voice their own needs and to feed into future service

planning. Also on the site is the ESOL Language Advisory Service which assesses migrants' English needs and has comprehensive information on courses available, and the CAB's Multi Lingual Information Service. Various other general service agencies working in areas of vital importance to those in the settlement process, such as the Careers Service and Work and Income New Zealand, regularly provide a service at the centre, and it has recently expanded to include a learning centre next door focused on providing support for refugees. This co-location of services means that a referral from one agency to another can be acted on immediately, and the presence of the CAB service can provide information about any issue not dealt with on site. In the 2006-2007 year, over 12,000 visitors came to the centre and 1,364 registered for one of the services offered by ARMS itself (ARMS Annual Report, 2006-7).

In Hamilton, the Waikato Migrant Resource Centre, administered by the Hamilton Multicultural Services Trust, offers a similar range of services with the role of acting as "a central information and resource centre for people who have come to the Waikato Region from other countries and those who support them" (Waikato Migrant Resource Centre, 2007, p. 7). The Trust itself provides the Interpreting Service, Settlement Support, Computers in Homes for refugees, and health promotion. Other tenants in their centre include ESOL Home Tutors, RMS Refugee Resettlement, CAB, the ESOL Assessment and Advisory Service and Fraser High School Confident Communication Course.

Significantly, both these centres are negotiating to open new premises to meet expanding needs.

### **Adjusting a non-targeted service**

The Citizen's Advice Bureaux (CAB) is an organisation that provides a service of information, advice and assistance to members of the public, regardless of their demographic profile, including migrant status. The service is universal in terms of who can use the service *and* the matters it assists people with. The first bureau opened 38 years ago, and it now operates from 91 locations around New Zealand.

Bureaux maintain a database, as well as other constantly updated sources of information, about more than 50,000 organisations, including government departments and community organisations and services. Most of the bureaux also offer other specialist services such as JP services or free legal clinics for more complex cases. For the CAB, providing a "settlement" service is simply meeting one of its dual aims, "to ensure that individuals do not suffer through ignorance of their rights and responsibilities or of the services available; or through an inability to express their needs effectively" (Annual Report 2007, p. 1). However, the organisation has been attentive to the growing diversity among enquirers, recognised that migrants and former refugees may have particular needs, and taken moves to ensure that its service is attuned to new demands.

The service is delivered by trained volunteers, and the training that they receive includes modules on cross-cultural communication and effective listening, so that they are well prepared to assist a client who has difficulty with English. The effective listening training teaches them to take time to clarify the issues involved within the initial enquiry, if necessary asking supportive questions to help uncover the problem. This provides a non-threatening forum for discussion of issues and is conducive to getting to the heart of the matter. Where there is limited understanding of rights and responsibilities within the New Zealand community, the apparent subject of the enquiry may not be the real issue.

Migrant clients enquire about specific immigration issues such as visas and residency, but also about many other matters, such as education, employment, housing, welfare or consumer issues. The comprehensive database and information sources, along with extensive knowledge of their own communities, mean that interviewers can generally provide the answer required on the spot, but they are also well-positioned to connect the client with any other services they may require. Their ultimate aim is empowering people and communities through timely provision of information. As Kerry Dalton, the chief executive, explains,

People come to us based on an immediate need or an immediate issue or an immediate question and that's how they learn. ... One term for this is 'citizenship learning'... It's lifelong learning, where people learn by having a need and then having that need addressed ... That's a really effective way of learning and absorbing knowledge and information.

With a strong ethos of preventing barriers to their service, in recent years, many of the bureaux have been able to offer some of their ethnic clients a service in their own language. This was initially enabled because of the increasing number of migrants who themselves trained as CAB interviewers, and who were therefore able to respond to enquirers in more than one language. This is now supplemented by the Multi Lingual Information Service (MLIS), which provides an interpreting service in 26 languages, either face-to-face from its premises in the ARMS centre, or by telephone for clients of the CAB (and Settlement Support Coordinators) around the country. The staff are fully trained bureau interviewers.

In 2006, 18% of enquirers to bureaux nationally were non-English background speaking. The MLIS alone responded to approximately 20,000 enquirers in 2007.

### **Online information**

In recognition that nowadays people have new choices about how to receive information, websites have become an important way for NGOs to ensure that migrants and refugees have access to information. Both ARMS and CAB have benefited from the Digital Strategy community Partnership Fund and are developing new web portals. ARMS' existing website received over 430,000 hits in 2006-2007.

The New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Council's (NZFEC) website provides extensive information about its own service, including that of its 17 regional councils, but also a large number of links to other information relevant to new settlers. This ranges from background information on concepts such as cultural safety, to a large number of links to websites covering local services around the regions, job vacancies and job-seeking advice and government departments. Part of this information is specifically designed as pre-arrival information.

### **Making connections on behalf of newcomers**

However, services targeted to the needs of migrants and refugees are not available in every case, and the task of some of the NGOs is to mediate their access to general service providers. For those without the personal resources to make their own way and undertake transactions in English, one way is for NGO workers to set up the links and negotiate the business in hand on their behalf. RMS



operates in this manner in many aspects of its work with newly arrived refugees, while at the same time seeking to encourage independence for its clients. For example, prior to arrival, the service works with Housing New Zealand or other sources to locate appropriate housing in locations where there are family contacts or an existing ethnic community for the incoming refugees. The service trains volunteers from the local community and forms small teams to work with each family, supported by paid local and regional staff. Since their clients often have very little English, these teams of volunteers set up links to establish the new arrivals within a network of support and other agencies, such as Work and Income New Zealand, a bank, schools for their children, and medical services. In more complex cases, there are paid professional staff who can provide specialised social work and mental health support.

For refugees who have come from societies that bear very little resemblance to this one, and perhaps from years in camp conditions, this level of hands-on assistance is absolutely vital to establish the basic infrastructure of their life in New Zealand.

### **First language interpreters to support access to services**

First language support is another very valuable way of facilitating equitable access to services for those with faltering confidence in their English to achieve their ends. The Hamilton Multicultural Services Trust (HMST), which runs the Waikato Migrant Resource Centre, offers an interpreting service provided by professionally trained and accredited interpreters available free to other not-for-profit social support organisations and at a fee more widely. The value of this service in ensuring that migrants and refugees can have their needs and their options for service fully understood is attested to by the statistics: 1,541 interpreting assignments were taken up in 2006. The provision of a professional interpreting service removes for migrants and refugees sometimes inappropriate reliance on untrained speakers of the first language: as one of the participants in White et al. (2001) explained, "I feel not very good because this is private. I want some professional person to help" (p. 15). Trust staff also report that it helps other service providers become aware of the value that a skilled interpreter adds to the consultation, that when negotiations are carried out over a significant language barrier there may be layers of information and understanding that are not uncovered.

### **English language skills to support access to services**

Non-native speakers of English with a little more confidence, or in relation to less complex transactions, can be empowered to gain access to general services through supporting them to develop English language skills. A more extensive account of the service offered by ESOL HT will be given later, but an important feature to mention here is that home tutors are encouraged in their training to think about language as a tool for living, and about the particular needs of the learner they are working with. As part of their training course they are required to approach a service provider within their community with the eyes of a learner, to consider the language demands it would make and think about how they could work with a learner to meet them. Throughout the training they are encouraged to consider everyday texts such as newspapers and brochures as language resources, and to be responsive to any particular circumstances that arise for the learner they are working with. Learners can be prepared for predicted encounters with service providers by work on relevant printed material, discussion of cultural issues revealed, pre-teaching for likely

language challenges, role plays and perhaps even a visit to the site accompanied by the tutor. This approach introduces learners to possibilities presented by their new society, and helps them develop independence within the community.

### **Assisting general service providers**

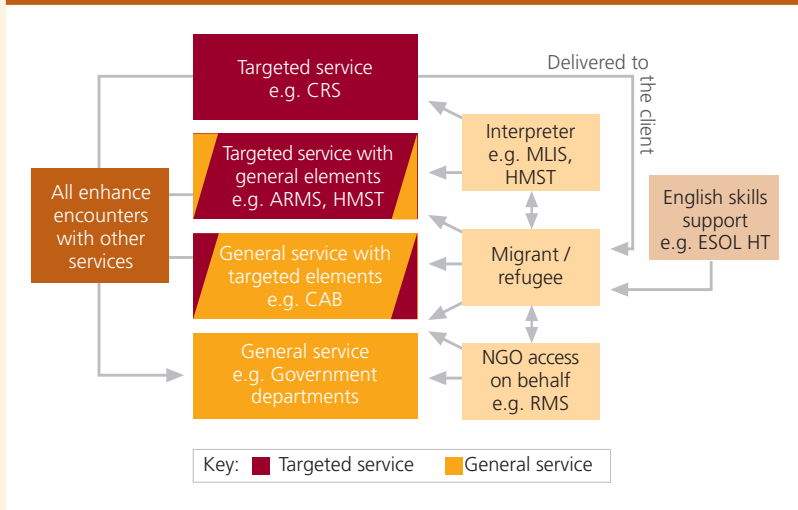
Another way that NGOs contribute to the achievement of equitable access to information and services is through educating other agencies about appropriate ways of relating to migrant and refugee clients. This will be expanded on later, but at this point it is also important to stress that the services provided above, which might be seen as essentially for the benefit of the migrants and refugees themselves, actually assist both parties in general service encounters. Difficulties in understanding are not necessarily confined to the migrant applicant. This is a point made in NZFEC (2004): “Ethnic community members comment on the attitude and behaviour of government agencies. They say there is a general lack of understanding and awareness of the specific needs of ethnic people” (p. 12).

For new migrants, interacting and presenting themselves in a language they are not very confident in is highly challenging, and that can be exacerbated by unfamiliar surroundings, and an apprehension of strangers who have the power to have an important impact on their lives but who often do not know how to make their English easy to understand. These may not be the circumstances in which either the general service agency employee or the flustered applicant can develop a real understanding of the situation or the appropriate response. Where initial preparation has occurred in the non-threatening, non-regulatory atmosphere of an NGO service leading to a more informed view of rights and responsibilities in New Zealand, or where there is someone to accompany the applicant and assist their communication, this is supportive not only of the migrant but of the host community agency employees, perhaps equally in need of support in communicating with clients whose experience and circumstances, as much as their language, differ from the local norms they are used to and which form the basis of their explanations and their initial judgements.

As Spoonley et al. assert, longstanding members of wider New Zealand society “need to have confidence that their ways of life will not be compromised or jeopardised by the arrival of new settlers” (2005, p. 86). The role of NGOs in providing information and understanding of the new community must be seen as valuable, therefore, in helping newcomers towards a greater understanding of what those ways of life, their historical foundations, their current debates and their institutional and legislative underpinnings are.

To sum up, NGOs have found a range of ways to help meet the objective of equitable access to information and services. There is thus the potential for those who live in centres where the full range is offered, to have a choice about how they access services, a choice that is likely to change as they become more confident in their new surroundings and move, for example, from using an interpreting service to approaching familiar agencies as speakers of English. This pathway is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Equitable access to information and services: providing a pathway



## 2.2 English language skills

The previous section covered the general range of information and advice sources. The next two sections will deal with specific areas germane to a sense of satisfactory settlement, which are seen as particularly important by NGOs and their clients, English language skills and employment.

The value of increased skills in the most widely spoken language of the host community is self-evident, as indicated by research into the New Zealand settlement experience. For example, White et al. (2001) found that proficiency was seen by most migrants and refugees as important or very important in all the categories they investigated, but in particular, for employment (p. 16). Ho et al. (2000, citing Fletcher 1999), indicate that proficiency in the host society language "has a positive effect on migrants' relative earnings, labour market opportunities and occupational status" (p. 13). This importance is recognised in the New Zealand Settlement Strategy where one of the goals is that migrants and their families "become confident using English in a New Zealand setting or are able to access appropriate language support" (Department of Labour, 2007a, p. 11). The services described in this section can also be seen as meeting the Ministry of Social Development (n.d.) goal of "building the knowledge base."

A key contributor to improvements in English is opportunities to use it, but as Norton (2000) demonstrated, in her study of migrant women in Canada, these opportunities are not always easy to come by, and many of the interactions that are available to newcomers are minimal, repetitive and place struggling English speakers in a position of powerlessness by not creating conditions that allow them to express their own purposes. White et al. (2001) suggests that the same lack of access to opportunities for conversation in English operate in New Zealand. This situation is often not foreseen, and the difficulty and time involved in becoming a fluent speaker of the new language is an aspect often underestimated by new arrivals (Altinkaya & Omundsen, 1999). There are many reasons why people may be unable to attend the classes offered at more formal educational institutions for the length of time needed to achieve their aspirations for English proficiency, or indeed at all, including financial considerations, childcare responsibilities and hours of work.

It is clear from the previous section that the service provided by a number of the participant NGOs indirectly creates conditions for useful practice and improved confidence in English. Every encounter with someone who is primed and trained to adjust their communication to the level of language of their clients is a source of potential English learning and increased confidence. Likewise, workshops offered on any topic which are delivered in English that is accessible to refugees and migrants will be supporting their language skills, and many have an overt language component (helping people prepare appropriate CVs, for example, of necessity addresses language matters). So it can be noted that all of the NGOs provide conditions which contribute to this outcome in part of their service. This is, though, the primary focus of ESOL HT, and some of the programmes it has evolved to meet increasingly complex demands will be examined here.

### Home tutoring

The basis of this service is bringing together a member of the host community who has been appropriately trained with a migrant or refugee who has English language needs. Because of the one-to-one pairing, tutors can be very responsive to individual needs, dealing with language demands around the immediate issues that arise in every migrant's process of learning to live in New Zealand, whether that is a puzzling school newsletter, a job application or a census form to fill in: as one of the tutors describes it, a point brought up by the learner will often:

just spark a lesson because they've brought up something they need to know. You're doing it for them, you know. It's not for us to impose on them what they must learn; it's entirely up to them." (Settlement through English: a history of ESOL Home Tutors, 2006, p.36)

As well as the focus on matters which can enable migrants to participate more fully as responsible adults in our society, this weekly encounter where the focus is on achieving and expanding mutual understanding in English is the only time for many migrants where someone is dedicated to encouraging them to express themselves in their new language. It is a time when they have the chance to ask and talk about the myriad aspects of life in New Zealand, and to share their own experiences and views, so there is often much beyond the language that is learned.

An important aspect of this service is that it goes to the learners at a time convenient to them, thus providing a connection between the host community and even those migrants and refugees who are seldom free to get away from their homes, such as mothers of young children or grandparents whose limited English makes them fearful to venture out alone. The three biggest work categories of home tutor learners are homemakers, the unemployed and retired people, all potentially isolated. It is nevertheless also available for fully employed people whose work may prevent them from taking up other classes. Being in a job does not guarantee easy development of fluent English. A worker in a takeaway business, for example, generally has available very limited kinds of transactions. On the other hand, employment may impose specific demands, such as being clear on the telephone, which need extra support. The flexibility of the service thus makes it invaluable at many stages of settlement. More than 3,000 learners were assisted through this service in 2007.

When Skill New Zealand sought providers of pre-paid English courses for family members of skilled migrants who had not met the English criterion, the value of this service was recognised. Through its English for Migrants service, based on the home tutoring concept, but with tutors with a higher level of training, ESOL HT is the largest provider in the country of this government scheme.

### **Social English groups**

ESOL HT schemes also offer group sessions where migrants are invited to join in learning and social activities largely mediated through accessible English, though often supported bilingually, in an informal and welcoming setting. These continue opportunities for language development, but also provide a vital social network with other migrants and refugees, from the same and other countries of origin. The presence of fellow nationals may make this an easier point of entry for some than a one-to-one encounter with a New Zealand stranger. Beyond that, the shared experience of meeting the migration challenge and struggling with English forges important bonds and friendships with migrants who are not speakers of the same language, which are important for helping develop a sense of belonging to the community in the new country.

The activities of social English groups include community visits, invited guests and discussion of current concerns which contribute to the possibility of understanding and participating in wider society. Special interest groups can develop in response to specific needs, such as getting a driver's licence or for caregivers of young children. Importantly, they also include sharing food and recipes and having fun together. To quote one participant, "I love it. You go there and you feel you belong," (Robertson, 2008, p. 6). Over 3000 learners attend annually throughout the country.

Other NGOs, such as Ethnic Councils, provide English conversation groups or regular social contact opportunities, such as women's groups, which, since English will often be the medium of communication in the session, increase practice in a social setting.

### **Bilingual literacy classes**

A more recently developed service has been bilingual literacy classes. It became obvious that existing ESOL provision was not attuned to the needs of refugees arriving not only with very limited English, but with no previous literacy in their own languages. These learners, who are learning English and having their first experience of literacy at the same time, need tuition over an extended time, bilingual support and tuition and resources closely focused on their specific needs. This service was developed with research and pilots conducted with Unitec and AUT, and is now offered by ESOL HT in seven locations in areas of high refugee settlement. The classes are for six to ten hours per week, and are taught by a team including a qualified ESOL teacher and specially trained bilingual (or trilingual) tutors to learners with no more than six years of previous formal education. Many of them have none at all. To meet the needs of this niche situation, special resources, curricula and an assessment kit have had to be developed. It is currently provided for 355 learners each year.

### **Pathways to mainstream education**

For some learners, a service provided in small chunks which can accommodate life demands remains appropriate over the length of their settlement. For others, a more formal and intensive learning programme may be needed at times, especially as English skills increase. For these learners, ESOL HT services can function as part of a staircasing process, enabling them to achieve high enough skills to benefit from English classes in Polytechnics, which are often not designed for very low level learners. Beyond those, they may want to enter mainstream education courses to increase their skills, particularly in relation to employment:

Achieving good educational outcomes requires ethnic people to be able to participate and to realise their full potential, through access to education and training services that are appropriate and targeted to meet their needs. (Office of Ethnic Affairs, 2002, p. 17).

ESOL Assessment and Access advice is one of the services that is offered in the first-stop migrant centres to assist in the identification of such courses.

Other services, too, keep a pathway towards further education visible for clients. Specialist workshops offered by ARMS, for example, generally make links with tertiary providers of employment related courses within Auckland, and a strong current in the accounts of one-time ESOL home tutor learners in *Connecting Cultures: Journal of ESOL Home Tutors* is their passage from home tutoring into vocational courses, such as real estate, or further education such as adult high school study, and the continuing support of their home tutors through their further study.

### Supporting students in compulsory education

The provision of education for children and young people falls within the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. However, the transition to New Zealand schools has been particularly difficult for some refugee youth, especially those with little previous experience of formal schooling, and this is an area where the expertise of ChangeMakers Refugee Forum has been called on, working with schools with a high refugee-background enrolment on programmes to improve outcomes for the students.

## 2.3 Employment

The NZFEC 2001 conference declared “that employment is the key to successful integration into, and participation in, all aspects of New Zealand life” (Office of Ethnic Affairs, 2002, p. 40). It is also the driving force behind that part of the immigration policy that relates to migrants, as opposed to refugees. Migrants are chosen on criteria that are judged to indicate their value to economic transformation, one of the three government priorities, such as their skills, education or ability to invest in businesses in New Zealand. This intention is clearly expressed in the New Zealand Settlement Strategy: migrants, refugees and their families can “obtain employment appropriate to their qualifications and skills and are valued for their contribution to economic transformation and innovation” (Department of Labour, 2007a, p. 11). However, even skilled migrants often have great difficulty finding appropriate employment in New Zealand and are over represented in the unemployment statistics. For refugees with limited formal education, the situation can be even harder. This difficulty is reflected in the wording of the plan of action related to this goal:

#### 1.3 Increasing access to employment

Identify practical measures, in partnership with other organisations, to reduce migrants’ barriers to employment and enhance their employment outcomes. (Department of Labour, 2007b, p. 5)

This is an important focus of the work of a number of the participant NGOs and there is a range of ways in which attempts are made to accomplish it, some of which have already been mentioned. One organisation that has a set of coordinated activities operating at different levels is ARMS.

## Pathways towards employment

ARMS offers employment support across the spectrum from refugees with minimal education to highly skilled professionals. ReactNOW is an often highly personalised programme targeted towards refugees, particularly young people. Dr Mary Dawson, executive director, describes it thus:

It could range from attending workshops, to suggesting jobs to them that come up in the paper, to helping them with CVs and cover letters to rehearsing job interviews, to taking them to the interviews, to working with their employers when they hit a bit of an obstacle, perhaps around understanding the Health and Safety regulations. We'll go and work with the young person again and bring in an interpreter if needed, anything like that that's just going to help the young person to access the sort of job they want and then for them to stay in the job. ARMS provides that directly.

ARMS also works to encourage employers to take on these applicants.

For those with a higher level of skills, they provide weekly 'First Steps to Employment' workshops which introduce participants to job-seeking in the Auckland environment, including information on New Zealand work culture, and preparation for the job application process, as well as information about and connections with the employment assistance services available to them. At a higher level, a range of free specialised workshops is offered in collaboration with other organisations targeting specific areas of interest to skilled migrants such as small business, teaching or employment in administration positions, recognising that in many ways, conditions and work culture in New Zealand will require adjustments even in the area of their professional specialisation. They also work in collaboration with the Special Interest Group for Immigrant Engineers (SIGIE, part of the Institute of Professional Engineers of New Zealand) on an initiative to assist migrants with professional engineering qualifications into engineering employment in New Zealand. Their work in this area also extends into advocacy for doctors from refugee background seeking to gain medical registration.

All of these services address a gap identified by Ho et al. (2000) in their investigation into settlement needs. They found a dearth of services offered by any sector "that help highly skilled migrants gain employment in the New Zealand labour market" (p. 6).

Alongside all of these activities, ARMS keeps their clients constantly aware of other support available to them through agencies such as the Careers Service and the Auckland Chamber of Commerce. ARMS supported 980 employment clients in 2007.

## Job mentoring

Language skills and employment being closely aligned, ESOL HT also has been highly responsive in this area, developing niche programmes for nurses working towards registration in one centre, and dairy farm workers in another, for example. In two areas a job mentoring programme is also offered, which is once again a one-to-one relationship between a member of the host-community and a migrant or refugee that is the heart of the home tutor service. In this case, the host member has expertise in the employment area the refugee or migrant wishes to enter. A recent development has been regular gatherings of mentoring pairs to expand the individual relationship into a network to support the job search.

The SIGIE/ARMS initiative for engineers also has a job mentoring component.

## Volunteering

Another important step that refugees and migrants can take towards paid employment is through becoming volunteers themselves. Settlement NGOs are encouraging of this and several reported an increased trend in recent years. It is valuable on many fronts. For example, it can be a stepping stone towards transferring country-of-origin skills to the new environment, provide work experience in a New Zealand context and exposure to norms of workplace communication, and be the source of a New Zealand based job reference. All of this can contribute to greater confidence for volunteers, but equally CAB staff, for example, note that it provides prospective employers with evidence that the volunteer has completed training in English, gained extensive new knowledge about New Zealand and met quality standards, and that can increase their confidence to employ. ARMS, too, has found that its scheme to provide work experience in administrative support roles has led to paid employment for many participating volunteers.

Acceptance into a work team can also contribute strongly to a sense of belonging. A volunteer may still in other aspects of his or her life experience an identity of “newcomer”, but in this role of providing service to those in greater need be in an evolving process of becoming host. The deepening relationships with New Zealanders of longer standing that working together naturally leads to, the recognition by others of the expertise they have gained from personal experience and the achievement of role model status can feel very inclusive: one migrant ESOL home tutor, for example, found that “for once my accent was an asset instead of a liability,” (National Association of ESOL Home Tutors, 2006, p. 36), and a volunteer in another resettlement agency that “I was very happy and feel this volunteering was an important part of settling in and knowing more about the community and the support that is out there for people,” (Volunteer Wellington, 2008, p. 4). Pauline Harper, one of Volunteer Wellington’s co-managers, describes the results in this way:

We’ve seen the impact and the power of the volunteer sector really to bring people together in a proper work situation, but perhaps it’s got less immediate stress-making demands because people aren’t getting a paycheque at the end of the week, so there’s time to learn, time to make mistakes, time to explore.

However, volunteering is not necessarily a straightforward choice and several of the participant NGOs have taken steps to address difficulties and open this opportunity to a wider range of clients. NZFEC, working in collaboration with CAB, held a number of discussion forums with their members to research ethnic views and experience resulting in the 2004 publication, *Volunteering and ethnic communities: A dialogue with ethnic communities*. What it reveals is that there are barriers within the ethnic communities themselves, given that the form of volunteering that has most public acknowledgement in New Zealand, offering your service to an external entity such as an NGO, is not part of the traditions that they arrive with, by which volunteering might “revolve around helping, sharing and giving, first to their own family, closely followed by their extended families, then to their own ethnic communities” and only then to the wider community (p.11). Another difficulty is that expectations of gender roles may not match those of New Zealand society, though “such traditions may have positive results from a community perspective and contribute to harmony” (p 17). The research also reveals, though, that members of ethnic communities have not always had positive volunteering experiences, finding a “lack of confidence from voluntary organisations of what a new ethnic volunteer can do – giving ethnic volunteers menial jobs that do not match their abilities and skills” (p. 19), for example. They therefore suggest that “volunteer organisations need to develop culturally appropriate practices” (p. 8).



CAB provides an example of such practices, having produced Migrants and Ethnic Groups Best Practice Guidelines for use within its service to encourage inclusiveness on all fronts. There are suggestions for recruitment of paid and unpaid staff to represent the cultural diversity of the local area, such as building effective networks with ethnic groups and recruitment publicity which includes “the use of languages that reflect the ethnic makeup of their area,” with active encouragement of applications “from different cultures where there has been a genuine client need identified.” Advice extends to recruits whose English level limits their skills in frontline client work, such as asking them to “network and gather information within their own communities.” Efforts have been repaid: approximately 30% of CAB trainees in 2007 were migrants.

Another organisation that has noted and responded to a great increase in non-English speaking background volunteers is Volunteer Wellington. One of their basic tasks is the recruitment, assessment and placement of volunteers with their 350 member organisations. They are also themselves employers of volunteers, who carry out the interviewing involved in that placement process. They provide training for their own volunteers, and ensure that the volunteers they place elsewhere are trained and supported, making follow-up contact with both parties to check that the process has been successful. In this role of recruiting volunteers, their publicity material is inclusive, showing a clear presence of ethnic faces and specifically referring to the value of migrant volunteers.

Another of their major tasks is to provide training and forums for their member organisations, and in this they have made considerable effort to counteract the situation described in the NZFEC (2004) research of undervaluing the efforts of ethnic volunteers: “so another aspect of it has been the training and the advocacy so that the organisations are more open. There was prejudice” (Pauline Harper, Volunteer Wellington). They encourage member organisations to look for ways they can support the volunteering of applicants with limited English, for example, by buddying them with another volunteer initially. Some years ago they changed the job description form that member organisations fill in so that it asks about communication skills required rather than English status, and that has helped the agencies recognise that high communicative competence is not dependent on native speaker proficiency. They run regular lunchtime forums for members, and at least two a year are on topics related to respecting diversity. Volunteer Wellington’s own experience of employing an ethnically diverse volunteer force has been extremely positive.

Their publication *Once upon a time ... (2007)* attests to the success of volunteering experience in leading to further paid employment, with many of the former volunteers whose stories are told now in the workforce. This is a factor recognised by Work and Income New Zealand, which regularly refers jobseekers, including migrants and refugees, to the service.

### **Volunteering at governance level**

All of the settlement NGOs also encourage volunteering at the governance level of their organisation, which serves a dual purpose. While it provides an invaluable ethnic perspective on the policies and practice of the NGO, it also allows the exercise of existing leadership skills of members of ethnic communities, and the development of new knowledge of how they may be used within New Zealand contexts. Ahmed Yusuf Ali describes this aspect of his participation in the ESOL HT’s Ethnic Advisory Group:

We, the ethnic people ourselves, we will have more involvement and we will get experience, so that we can go back to our communities and reinforce our own people, so the information will go from the ethnic communities to the national home tutors association and then from them to the ethnic communities. So it's very, very important. (National Association of ESOL Home Tutors, 2006, p. 55)

There is a danger of tokenism if account is not taken of the challenge involved in understanding the sometimes arcane language and process of meetings (*minutes, I move that ... , I second that*). ESOL HT has developed a weekend training course for non-English-speaking background members of the committees that oversee its schemes to support their equitable involvement. The organisation's dual understanding of second language needs and issues of governance and accountability have led to a uniquely targeted training package.

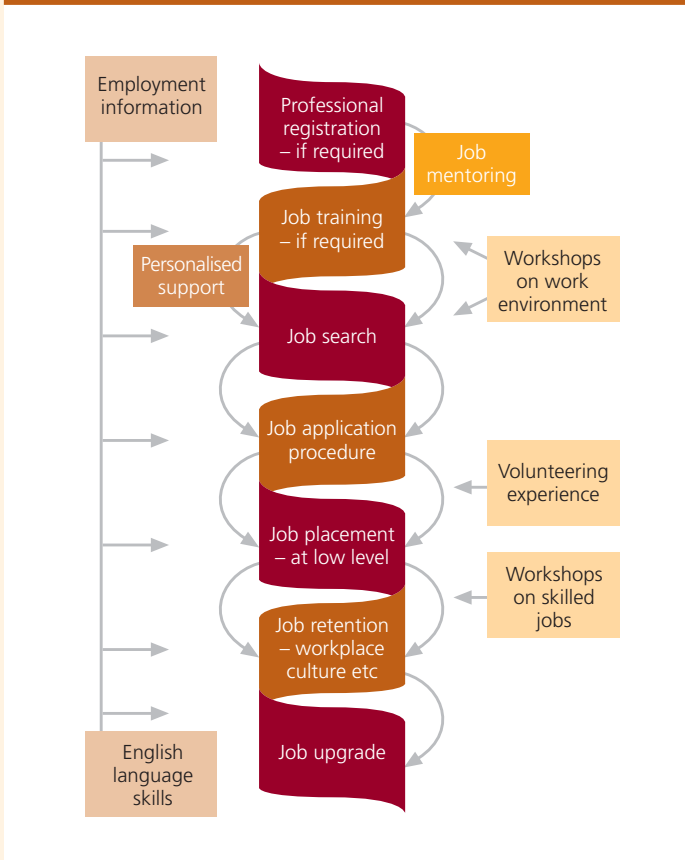
### **NGOs as employers**

A final point to be made in this regard is that all of the participant NGOs have migrants and refugee-background employees in their own paid workforce, profit from the particular expertise that arises from personal experience and have strategies to facilitate this employment. To take interpreters as an example, the workers employed by CRS to deliver health promotion to the refugee-background communities of which they are a part are essential to getting the message across effectively. HMST, itself staffed almost entirely by migrants and former refugees, provides scholarships for people of refugee background to join a training course for entry level interpreters, leading to employment in its Interpreting Service. The CAB's Multi Lingual Information Service is provided by paid staff who have also been fully trained and accredited as bureau interviewers.

ESOL HT has a national equal employment opportunity policy with a particular focus on increasing the number of migrants and refugees employed by the service. Likewise, RMS is committed to the employment of former refugees as key members of staff, as interpreters of language, but also as "brokers of cultural knowledge and understanding between settling refugees and the host communities" (RMS, 2005), and this group makes up approximately 50% of the paid workforce.

Figure 2 presents some of the steps involved in achieving employment goals and where different types of support apply.

Figure 2: Employment at appropriate levels: providing a pathway



### A final word on employment

While these and other NGOs pay careful attention to employment issues, and act on many fronts to support their clients into work, various studies reveal a prejudice among New Zealand employers against employing those without New Zealand work experience, or even without a New Zealand accent (e.g., Henderson, Trlin, & Watts, 2006; McIntyre, Ramasamy, & Sturrock, 2003). NGOs work hard to ensure that migrants are job-ready, but these efforts are in vain if there are too few migrant-ready employers.

## 2.4 Supportive connections

The fourth area that Ho et al. (2000) identified in their investigation into the needs of recent migrants was supportive connections, and in looking at these the categories originally developed by Jansen (1998) to describe social cohesion and further explored in a New Zealand context by Spoonley et al. (2005) serve well. Spoonley et al. make two divisions, conditions for a socially cohesive society, comprising inclusion, recognition and legitimacy, and elements of socially cohesive behaviour, including participation and belonging. Examination of NGOs' contribution to these important aspects of settlement will call on some of the services already described, but with a focus on the perspective of clients' emotional well-being.

## Inclusion

Spoonley et al. see inclusion as one of the conditions for social cohesion:

All people in New Zealand share access to equitable opportunities and services and contribute to good settlement outcomes in ways that are recognised and valued (2005, p. 103)

Programmes designed to increase migrants' and refugees' equitable access to services are a major component of this, and have been described in some detail. Here we will look briefly at aspects of the manner of delivery which make NGOs provision particularly inclusive, helping migrant and refugee clients feel "recognised and valued."

Making their own service readily accessible is an important aspect, and this is built into the design of many of the programmes offered. For example, CRS and ESOL HT Christchurch jointly offer the Living Well in Christchurch programme combining ESOL and literacy tuition with orientation to life in Christchurch. The learners are preliterate refugees, primarily women with pre-school children. Alongside the tuition programme itself are a number of measures to remove barriers to the women's participation. Volunteers provide transport to the class and a crèche is provided for the children. However, leaving children in the care of non-family members is not an expectation in many of the cultures involved, and an interim step is provided with volunteer tutors providing one-to-one tuition within the crèche area for new learners until they feel confident to leave their children in the care provided and join the main classes. The crèche itself focuses on preparing the children for successful transition to kindergarten or school. Attention to transport issues is built into a number of the services provided by other NGOs as well.

For general services such as Volunteer Wellington or CAB, specific measures to indicate that they welcome migrants and refugees are an important way of inviting access, and the visibility of diverse New Zealanders on Volunteer Wellington publicity has already been mentioned. That organisation also makes a practice of celebrating events of significance to the cultures of the volunteer interviewers who work for them, such as the lunar New Year. One of the CAB's Migrants and Ethnic Groups Best Practice Guidelines encourages bureaux to display "posters, signage and interior decorating which reflects and is welcoming for the variety of cultures and languages within the local area" (2003, p. 3). The theme of CAB Awareness Week in 2007 was 'Celebrating diversity'.

## Recognition

This is about giving voice to migrants and refugees, respecting what they bring, learning to live with and welcome diversity, and avoiding discrimination. It corresponds to the New Zealand Settlement Strategy goal that migrants and their families:

are respected and accepted by host communities for their diverse cultural backgrounds and their community interactions are positive. (Department of Labour, 2007a, p. 11)

and the Connecting Diverse Communities goals of "addressing discrimination and promoting respect" and "improving connections with cultural identity" (Ministry of Social Development, n.d.).

This is an important thrust of the work of ChangeMakers Refugee Forum, who insist that "nothing about us should be without us," and that "we are experts on our issues, we know the solutions" (ChangeMakers Refugee Forum, 2008c). In setting up this pan-refugee governed and managed NGO,

unique in New Zealand, their first task was to find ways to recognise diversity within the 12 refugee-background communities they represent and to arrive at a focus on common ground:

They were not trying to speak with one voice. There were, and are, many voices. They recognise their differences. But they have something in common. They all come from a refugee background and they are living in Wellington. (2008b)

From this position they have developed with government agencies and NGOs an action plan and a set of Standards for Engagement designed to open up recognition of the voices of refugees by service providers. These will be further discussed in the section on action at regional level.

Another aspect of this goal is the expression of diversity, and the Ethnic Council members of NZFEC have a major role in supporting the maintenance of first language and cultural traditions through regular meetings and cultural celebrations.

The NGOs which have participated in this research have sought to listen to the voices of their client groups in various ways. For example, CRS have a fortnightly Youth Reference Group meeting where young refugees participate in discussion of issues and planning of events for their peers with a paid youth worker. Participants mentioned, too, the importance of ethnic staff and Board members in keeping the needs of their communities in focus.

### **Legitimacy**

The measure of legitimacy in Spoonley et al. is that “public institutions foster social cohesion, engender trust and are responsive to the needs of all communities” (2005, p. 103). As public institutions which provide a welcome for their client groups, the settlement NGOs can be seen as providing a first step in this direction. Dr Mary Dawson, executive director of ARMS, sees it as a major value of a centre that is dedicated to providing a service for migrants and refugees:

I think it is about providing a place and legitimacy, we have taken the trouble to try and figure out a place that will work for them. I think that is giving quite a strong signal to our newcomers about our intention to provide targeted coordinated support to assist their settlement.

Evidence of this can also be found in the report on a 2006 survey of users of the Waikato Migrant Resource Centre administered by HMST:

Refugees and migrants think of the centre as their best place to get information but they asked for more immigration issues to be dealt with at the Centre. This is mainly because they feel more welcomed and safe here to discuss issues related to Immigration rather than going to an Immigration Office where the atmosphere is more tense. (Hanna, 2006, p. 5)

Nevertheless, by helping enquirers better understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to other New Zealand institutions, NGOs can help increase migrants’ and refugees’ understanding of and confidence in those institutions, and perhaps enable them to approach them with less stress.

## Participation

This category concerns the ability of people to participate in life in New Zealand at all levels, from the development of personal social networks and involvement in organisations and groups to participation in civic and political life. A corresponding New Zealand Settlement Strategy goal is for migrants and their families to “form supportive social networks and establish a sustainable community identity” (Department of Labour, 2007a, p. 11), and the Connecting Diverse Communities initiative works towards “strengthening intercultural relationships” (Ministry of Social Development, n.d.).

## Social networks

A starting point for this discussion is opportunities provided for human connection with members of the host community, which is often difficult for new arrivals to achieve. It is the essence, though, of the person-to-person volunteer services of RMS and ESOL HT, where the experiences of everyday life are shared in regular encounters. This relationship is often the first in which the migrant can really experience “the emotional aspects of integration,” often harder to establish than the practical aspects (DeSouza, 2007). The benefit, though, is generally mutual. Volunteers, who enter into the role with an intention to give, frequently identify the ample benefits that they have received from this partnership: understanding of new cultures and rich human experiences, the sharing of food and cultural festivals, a new awareness of distant worlds and the diversity of their own community (see, for example, accounts in *Connecting Cultures: Journal of ESOL Home Tutors*). In both organisations, it is clear that the relationships often continue long after the service itself has concluded.

The RMS charter expresses a commitment to volunteerism, seeing it not simply as a response to restricted funding, but offering something not available within the more bounded professional relationships of paid social workers (or ESOL teachers), enabling important everyday connections between diverse community members. Volunteers provide an essential complement to other parts of the service more appropriately provided by paid professional staff.

## Participating in social activities

It is important to point out that these NGOs provide opportunities for leisure and fun as part of the new community as well as attending to practical needs. The annual reports of the regional Ethnic Councils report shared meals, a dance, concerts, cultural celebrations and an enthusiastically supported soccer festival. ARMS has a DiversityArts Programme with workshops and other events involving the performing arts. CRS looks for ways to connect clients with the opportunities their communities present, for example, by providing well attended swimming sessions for Muslim women for whom attendance at mixed pools is forbidden, and by organising a family outing to a local wildlife park which 150 people attended. Volunteer relationships also provide a channel for information about activities available to the general public, such as free civic events, and these can link newcomers further into the life of the community.

On the other hand, NZFEC provides information and invitations in the other direction by setting up many activities where the host community is invited to participate in events which celebrate the cultural diversity of their communities, such as multicultural festivals. These events were seen by the respondents to White et al. (2001) as “contributing to the welfare, confidence and cultural interests of immigrant and refugee groups, as well as to more positive intergroup relations within society” (p. 24).

### **Specially targeted services**

Those NGOs with a settlement focus clearly target their services to a migrant and refugee-background clientele. However, within that group there are some for whom settlement can present extra challenges, and special services have been developed to create greater opportunities to participate in the activities of life in New Zealand for them. They include youth, women and the elderly.

Ho et al. (2000) identified teenagers as a group “considered to encounter more problems in building up supportive connections” (p. 6). One reason identified by ChangeMakers (2007) is that youth form a substantial proportion of refugee communities, and role models and mentors are not always available within fractured refugee families. ChangeMakers advocates strongly for youth services and has two youth representatives on their Board, NZFEC has recently set up a Youth Forum, and CRS has turned its attention to the importance of improving settlement outcomes for this group. Their programme has been developed with a considerable amount of youth input and covers a spectrum from opportunities to discuss issues of concern to social outings which introduce young refugees to experiences their New Zealand counterparts are familiar with like outdoor activities, but in a setting which addresses parental anxieties.

At the other end of the age spectrum, HMST and CRS are among agencies which have recently increased activity focused on assisting older migrants and refugees, a group whose specific needs are also identified by Ho et al (2000), to see possibilities for an active retirement. CRS and ARMS have provided support to host community NGOs working with the elderly assisting them to respond to greater diversity in their clientele.

### **Belonging**

Spoonley et al. (2005) see various factors contributing to a sense of belonging, including “being part of the wider community, trust in other people, and common respect for the rule of law and for civil and human rights,” including understanding New Zealand’s bicultural foundations (p. 98), but also, essentially, being recognised and valued within the new community. This comes under the concept of national identity in the Settlement National Action Plan: “New Zealanders understand and accept cultural diversity – migrants, refugees and their families have a sense of peace and belonging in New Zealand while maintaining their cultural identities that contribute to New Zealand’s social and cultural vibrancy” (Department of Labour, 2007b, p. 10). In the process of settlement, it can be assumed that there are evolving levels of belonging, including that of taking on host roles, such as providing a welcome and support to newer arrivals.

This is an aspect of settlement that RMS has given careful consideration to, seeing it as central to the philosophy of their approach. They note that belonging is generally primarily established within family, then in concentric circles within different layers of the wider community. For refugees, all of this may need re-establishing, since even the family may be disrupted. First attention may therefore need to be paid to reunifying the family, and RMS has advocated on government policy to that end. Supporting families in refugee communities is a focus of ChangeMakers’ attention, too.

Beyond that, there need to be strong links with the ethnic community, which may exist already in New Zealand or need to be established. RMS’s policy of locating newly arrived refugees near existing communities contributes to this, as do the ethnic council members of NZFEC. However, ethnic

community members are often overtaxed by requests for support of new arrivals, especially those unused to operating in a New Zealand civic environment, and there is a great need for capacity-building, which will be discussed below.

Long-term viability of the community as a respected and valued part of New Zealand society depends on links reaching beyond the ethnic community, though, to avoid isolation and to enable future generations to have a sense of place here. As Ho et al. (2000) point out, “building relationships, both within and outside the migrants’ own ethnic communities, is essential in the connecting process of new migrants” (p. 30, emphasis in the original). Spoonley et al (2005, p. 95) suggest, too, that these links can mitigate negative host community reactions to perceived separation on the part of migrant groups. Measures identified in the previous section bringing host and new community members together are germane to this process, and to those can be added the opportunities that NGOs offer to migrants and refugees to contribute themselves as part of the hosting process, discussed in the Employment section. As one of the volunteers in *Once upon a time ...* (Volunteer Wellington, 2007) puts it, “During my leisure hours I wanted to do some service for my new country and for humanity.”

### **Respecting New Zealand’s bicultural foundations**

Spoonley et al. (2005) make particular mention of this factor as a contributor to belonging and it will be valuable to give brief consideration of how it is advanced by NGOs. Migrants and refugees may often be aware of its importance, but not necessarily informed about its dimensions and history. As respondents in NZFEC (2004) saw it, ethnic communities “are expected to acknowledge something they are not supported to understand, or apply in practice” (p. 18).

All of the NGOs acknowledge the Treaty of Waitangi as a basis of operation, and some of them have measures in place to provide the support NZFEC (2004) calls for. For example, the question of how learners might be introduced to an understanding of the Treaty’s and the tangata whenua’s position in New Zealand society is included in ESOL HT tutor training, with encouragement provided to tutors to take an active role in raising awareness through their work with learners. Introductory visits to marae are organised from time to time at local level to support the process, and specific teaching resources have been developed. ARMS also organises marae visits and they have worked with other organisations to ensure that there are workshops, based on a resource kit, *Tangata Tiriti – Treaty People*, written especially for migrants and refugees for use with community groups or ESOL classes. The NZFEC website also provides treaty information.

RMS (2006) and DeSouza (2007) both point out that it is often easier to respond to the practical requirements of settlement, the provision of housing, education and an income, since they are immediate, obvious and quantifiable. Emotional needs may be ignored, but “true integration requires more than life on an island in the middle of strangers” (RMS). It would seem that attention to the manner of delivery of their services ensures that NGOs contribute to resettlement on this level, too.



## 2.5 Educating the host community

Accounts of service provision have thus far concentrated largely on assisting migrants and refugees to adjust to life in New Zealand. However, settlement is not something that happens just to migrants and refugees: it can only achieve its goals if it happens to the whole community, and this two-way commitment is reflected in the New Zealand Settlement Strategy (Department of Labour, 2007a, p. 11) and in much of the literature on the topic. For example, “unless all New Zealanders make a conscious effort to promote understanding, and to value ethnic diversity, the ethnic communities risk becoming isolated and socially disadvantaged” (Office of Ethnic Affairs, 2002, p. 12). Ward (2006, p. 116) suggests that “the extent to which New Zealanders interact with new migrants, treat them fairly and respect cultural diversity influences migrant acculturation and adaptation.” The Settlement National Action Plan calls for action to address discrimination “so that the New Zealand environment respects and celebrates diverse communities and diverse communities feel they are positively respected and supported” (Department of Labour, 2007b, p. 12).

NGOs recognise raising awareness, understanding and skills in the host community as an important part of their roles.

### Service participants

Three of the participant NGOs provide training courses for thousands of New Zealanders every year (around 2,600 CAB, 1,000 ESOL HT, 400 RMS) which among them introduce trainees to units on cross cultural understanding, respect for diversity, the source cultures of refugees and migrants, the refugee and migrant experience and strategies for empowering clients through the delivery of the service. Volunteers’ awareness deepens through their developing relationships with the clients they work with, providing a real opportunity for an understanding that reaches beyond tokenism towards the possibility of a degree of reciprocal adjustment, the adoption of new practices, or empathetic insights into a new world view, for example. Volunteering provides a framework for New Zealanders to overcome their own barriers and take steps into new communities, just as the service does for the clients they serve. As one ESOL home tutor expressed it: “I really wanted to know these people and you can’t just go up and force yourself on someone” (National Association of ESOL Home Tutors, 2006, p. 32). This encounter between two people in their roles as community members often spills over into a wider range of community interactions as mutual invitations introduce them to family and friends and important cultural events.

### The wider community

Educating the wider community is recognised as a vital task for the migrant centres. One of the principles of the Waikato Migrant Resource Centre is that “it is also a source of information about settlement and cultural diversity for all people who are resident in Hamilton” (Waikato Migrant Resource Centre, n.d.). The centre runs cultural perspective seminars, each given by members of one of the main cultural groups in the Waikato, for local social service organisations, including government departments, and “movie nights” on ethnic themes for the general public as “a way of providing entertainment and information to the host communities in Hamilton, and a way of prodding people a little to say ‘We’re all in this together, let’s change our world’” (Rebecca Fraser, HMST).

In Auckland, working to promote responsiveness in mainstream organisations is also a feature of ARMS' task. A recent initiative is a forum called Their Home Now aimed at senior management of general social support NGOs to help them develop appropriate practices and locate supportive resources for a more diverse clientele. The Trust also provides resources itself, for example, a downloadable resource kit for those wishing to encourage migrants and refugees to participate more in civic and community life. CRS staff find, too, that as a link between refugee-background communities and mainstream health agencies, they are engaged in a two-way process, providing a conduit for health education to be delivered to the communities, but also raising health providers' understanding of how to reach refugees appropriately.

This is a role where ethnic NGOs have obvious expertise, as a link between their stakeholders and the host community. The Nelson Ethnic Council, for example, provides cultural diversity training for community groups, and ChangeMakers has invested considerable effort, in conjunction with agencies affiliated to the Regional Health and Wellbeing Action Plan, in developing *Standards for Engagement* (2008b), a resource for policy makers and service deliverers on how to engage in effective communication with refugee groups (see below).

## 3. The regional level: Collaboration and capacity-building

The previous section has been concerned with the delivery of service at the level of individuals and the interactions which support their everyday lives. In looking at the regional level the focus will be on processes of collaboration between organisations and agencies, and on capacity-building at community rather than individual level.

### Regional collaboration

The establishment of an ethos of collaboration to share information about programmes offered, to bring complementary strengths to cooperative initiatives, to avoid unnecessary duplication and to identify gaps and consider how they might be filled has been a feature of the Settlement Strategy and the Settlement Support initiative described in the Introduction:

Each of the goals contained in the New Zealand Settlement Strategy, therefore, requires the contribution of a range of agencies at national, regional and community levels (Department of Labour, 2007a, p. 9).

#### 4.3 Regional responsiveness to settlement

Develop regional settlement initiatives ... to improve service provision to migrants and refugees ... through improved coordination, cross-sectoral planning, information sharing and knowledge transfer (Department of Labour, 2007b, p. 14).

All of the NGOs participating in this research have taken part in regional forums and some have had longstanding very effective partnerships with other agencies, both within the NGO sector and across sector boundaries. ARMS was established with a prime focus on leading such a collaborative approach within the area of greatest refugee and migrant settlement in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Within the NGO sector, the Settlement NGOs Networking Group seeks to promote these aims, and there are plenty of valuable collaborations. A number of the participants, for example, mentioned the support that NZFEC offers to settlement support agencies, and the knowledge and energy of its key personnel in advising and supporting them. Mention has already been made of their collaboration with CAB to produce research on ethnic volunteering. Another example from these agencies is the evolving mentoring scheme developed between Volunteer Wellington and ChangeMakers to support the development of the latter organisation and capacity-building in its component groups which will be discussed below.

There are also longstanding partnerships with government agencies (CAB and Inland Revenue, ESOL HT and the Tertiary Education Commission, for example), with local government (e.g. HMST and Hamilton City Council) and with business organisation (e.g. ARMS and the Auckland Chamber of Commerce), to cite just a few from a wide field.

These have been valuable in building up a sense of trust in shared goals and in the quality service provision of the NGO sector.

## Collaborating in and with refugee-background communities

ChangeMakers Refugee Forum has made a significant contribution to the process of collaboration and consultation by bringing a pan-refugee approach and a challenge to other agencies as to the manner in which the voices of refugee-background communities should be invited and heard. They bring to the sector a close contact with the lived experience of refugee resettlement, and are able to be a conduit for increased understanding between host and refugee communities, but seek to do so on their own terms.

ChangeMakers have been involved in a two-way process of collaboration to strengthen communication between refugee communities and host agencies. Both government agencies and host community NGOs have supported the organisation to establish itself as a legal entity and enter into structures and ways of engaging that are recognised among policy makers, funders and service deliverers in New Zealand, but the organisation has also developed *Standards for Engagement: Guidelines for Central and Local Government, and NGOs Working with Refugee Background Communities* (2008b). Noting the discrepancy between “the resources, networks and knowledge that refugee background communities, NGOs and government agencies have access to,” they seek involvement in consultation pre-engagement, through a process of building relationships with people and tasks involved; during engagement, which is the “practical expression of our relationship”; and post-engagement, when feedback and evaluation of the work together should occur. Nine standards for the communication that should occur between parties are presented including matters such as accessible language or the provision of interpreting services (Standard 4), support and assistance to overcome barriers to engagement (Standard 6) and acknowledgement and utilisation of skills (Standard 7). They seek avoidance of duplication and of unnecessary consultation when a persistent issue has been identified through prior consultation (p. 6).

ChangeMakers made an important contribution to the collaboration between refugee communities, government and voluntary agencies in the Wellington region which produced the Refugee Health and Wellbeing Action Plan (2006), and is instrumental in overseeing and maintaining it.

## Capacity-building

ChangeMakers Refugee Forum and NZFEC are committed to supporting migrants and refugees at both community and individual level. A viable ethnic community that can operate with confidence under New Zealand conditions, valued by others and engaging with agencies on behalf of its members, for example, is an important aspect of having a sense of belonging in New Zealand that does not erase the first culture. As Ho et al. (2000) assert,

Cultural maintenance also serves to promote the migrants’ social integration. Those migrants who are proud of their own culture tend to have a sense of belonging and self-worth, which is likely to facilitate their integration into the host society. (pp. 39-40)

This will be most effective as a tool for integration, however, if it is clear that the host society recognises and respects this diversity and sees it as part of an evolving New Zealand.

A firmly established ethnic community can also nurture new arrivals, giving them a space where they can follow familiar ways, as well as providing role models for reaching beyond that when appropriate. There is evidence of a desire on the part of some migrants and refugees for some services (e.g. social work or mental health initiatives) to be at least partially provided from within their own communities (e.g., Fraser, 2007; MacGibbon & Greenaway, 2004) which clearly depends on strength within the community. The importance of this task in the Connecting Diverse Communities programme and in community-led initiatives is reflected in Section 3 of the Settlement National Action Plan (Department of Labour, 2007b). It is a focus of the work of the NZFEC, a long established organisation with a nationally recognised voice.

ChangeMakers Refugee Forum is of very much more recent development, having been formed in 2003. In terms of regional collaboration, of interest in the process of its establishment has been the support from host community NGOs to further its purposes. The Wellington Community Law Centre provided governance and financial management courses for community leaders from the ChangeMakers membership, and to support that Volunteer Wellington has initiated a mentoring programme. As Pauline Harper of Volunteer Wellington explains:

We've always been interested in mentoring and peer supervision and all of that aspect, and how helpful it is for people just taking steps. It's great going to courses but when you go back to your home or workplaces with a lot of knowledge, how do you apply it? ... It's not about doing the work for people, it's about taking people on a bit of a journey, being with that person.

Mentors provide advice and support to the refugee-background community leaders on constitutions, funding and management, get involved in community events, and recognise that the process is one of mutual learning: the community leaders gain practical support in operating effectively in New Zealand, but the mentors gain new understanding of operating in an atmosphere of diversity.

Recognition of host community responsibility for capacity-building is reflected in the service provided by the migrant centres, as well. One of the Waikato Migrant Resource Centre's principles states, "We recognise the responsibility of the host community to lead settlement support effort" (Waikato Migrant Resource Centre, n.d.). HMST is at present negotiating to open a second centre in which the focus will be on ethnic community groups. ARMS, too, takes on this role, for example, through supporting a refugee-background group with funding applications and premises as it develops capacity to operate independently. One of the advantages of location within such a centre is that there is a shared infrastructure and facilities, and the provision of telephone coverage through office hours which allows for a greater sense of presence and easier contact for both prospective clients and other agencies such as funding bodies.

## **Raising the profile regionally**

Another important contribution NGOs make at regional level is to raising host community awareness of diverse communities within New Zealand society, contributing further to their education about settlement issues. NZFEC is a major contributor to this with work that their members do to organise cultural festivals and other celebrations, and, importantly, to ensure that there is media coverage of these. All of the organisations have learned the value to their own operation and the acceptance of their client groups in using such channels to let New Zealanders know what is going on in their midst. An example of that, and an indication of the impact a small NGO can have in the community, was the newspaper coverage of the Community Services Award for two staff members from ChangeMakers Refugee Forum in the November 2007 Dominion Post Wellingtonian of the Year Awards.

## 4. National level advocacy, research and support of quality

This section will look at the contributions NGOs make at the national level, from the internal perspective of developing and maintaining the quality of their service, and from the external perspective of their role in advocacy and policy advice. It will then look at how that might best be expressed in partnership with government agencies.

### 4.1 Organisational structure

It is valuable to examine procedures for maintaining quality among these organisations. Other agencies considering entering partnerships with NGOs will wish for assurances that they are worthy partners, and there may be an apprehension that small agencies with limited funding resources, some of whose services are delivered by volunteers, may be vulnerable to wavering standards.

All of the NGOs are run with a dual management/governance structure overseen by Boards which typically prescribe a membership requiring the presence of client group representatives. ChangeMakers' Board is composed of former refugees. The larger organisations have mechanisms allowing for local level responsiveness as well as national standards and support for quality. For example, the federation structure of CAB and ESOL HT has local branches which are incorporated societies in their own right, but which through membership of a national body participate in agreed processes of quality control of training, governance procedures and so on. This structure is supported by national level training, regional and national meetings and conferences and other means of dissemination of ideas such as regular newsletters providing a continual loop of information in which new ideas can be introduced, piloted at local level and adopted more widely. The CAB's Multi Lingual Information Service developed in this way from a local response to the experience of diversity in Auckland. The national associations also employ a small number of staff whose brief includes keeping members aware of legislative and other developments, thus ensuring that the small local organisation can effect change with minimal effort, as well as providing national representation, publicity and many other services.

There is evidence from all the participant NGOs of a process of careful maintenance of standards of delivery through peer and self-evaluation. CAB audits its member bureaux every two years, and recently contracted a market research company to audit their service with clients. ESOL HT has manuals describing responsibilities of staff and local committee positions and each centre has a peer review every year in which it is measured against a set of quality standards. Other NGOs have undertaken recent reviews of their structures and operate with extensive strategic plans.

### Supporting quality delivery

The organisations, including those which provide their services largely through volunteer workers, have developed quality assurance systems to ensure that their services are the best they can be. For example, volunteer training courses are delivered by trained trainers, are specifically tailored to

the unique requirements of the service and have set assessment standards. RMS and ESOL HT training courses are NZQA-accredited. Training is followed by an initial period of close monitoring before full accreditation occurs which allows for screening for suitability, and the paid coordinator continues in an overseeing role, making regular contact and providing ongoing training. CAB volunteers, for example, are required to complete seven units of further training each year to maintain their accreditation, ensuring that they can keep abreast of developments relevant to the service they provide, such as changes to legislation and key services. Regional forums and national conferences provide another forum for development of volunteers' skills.

Because work with migrants and refugees occupies a niche, resources for training and delivery of service need often to be tailor-made. ARMS resources on the Treaty and community group inclusiveness have been mentioned above, for instance. ESOL HT has had a programme of resource development for well over a decade producing materials specifically designed for the service, including reading booklets for very new readers, needs analysis tools for use with absolute beginners, and resources responsive to the New Zealand context appropriate for use by tutors who have not had an extensive formal training.

On the other hand, for RMS and ESOL HT, where volunteers are brought into extended one-to-one contact with people in potentially complex situations, the training courses encourage them to recognise boundaries, and to seek professional help for complex matters that are beyond their expertise or willingness to accept involvement. It is important that volunteers recognise the limitations of the service that they can provide.

Of course, in all the NGOs paid skilled professionals deliver part or all of the services. It is common for workers to become very committed to the field, and a number of the NGOs noted that their employees tended to stay a long time and develop great expertise. Like any professionals in a modern work environment they are offered opportunities for professional development and further education.

### **Responding to niche demands**

Settlement NGOs operate in a very complex field given the huge diversity in the circumstances of refugees and migrants. This can present challenges to an organisation with a small staff and meagre financial resources. On the other hand, the grassroots contact that are maintained with client groups and the focus on responding to local situations in locally appropriate ways allows for small scale responses to intense but narrowly scoped challenges, responding to emergent situations and finding ways to deal with niche demands.

A number of such responses have been noted already, such as the ESOL HT bilingual literacy programme, the Volunteer Wellington/ChangeMakers mentoring programme, CAB's Multi Lingual Information Service, the workshops offered by ARMS for skilled professionals and CRS's swimming sessions for Muslim women. On an organisational scale, Christchurch Resettlement Services (CRS) has recently changed its name from Refugee Resettlement Services to reflect a recognition that there are important settlement challenges for migrants as well as refugees, and is currently working towards expanding services such as its youth programme to the migrant community.

There is certainly no room for complacency within this sector. As organisations like ChangeMakers give refugee voices more audibility new gaps are revealed: the Wellington Refugee Health and Wellbeing Action Plan brings up parenting in New Zealand, intergenerational issues, and establishing relationship with Eritrean women on which to build a health programme, among others, as areas for action.

## 4.2 Research, advocacy and policy advice

With longstanding involvement in settlement issues, NGOs have developed considerable expertise about the effects it imposes and well developed programmes for addressing them. In the case of many of their staff, there is lived experience of the transitions it demands, as well. They are therefore in a position to accumulate valuable information about the field, and to provide useful advice and information to policy makers, and this is a role that government agencies have often recognised.

The NGOs contribute to knowledge of the field through research projects, in particular related to the development of new projects, which are typically carried out through an action research model. The ARMS Annual Report 2006-7 states that:

Evidence based identification of needs, a positive problem-solving approach, and effective partnerships are each critical to improved settlement support and outcomes. (p. 2)

The NZFEC/CAB research on volunteering has already been referred to extensively. Research reports on mental health provision (HMST, Fraser, 2007), unmet legal needs of migrants and refugees in the Auckland region (ARMS, ongoing) and the experiences of migrant volunteers (Volunteer Wellington, Gray, 2008) are projects that have recently been supported by these NGOs. Volunteer Wellington is supporting ongoing evaluation of the evolving mentoring programme with ChangeMakers.

The information that the organisations collect as a normal part of their service accountability is also invaluable in developing an understanding of the field, and is used in the interests of advocacy. The CAB provides an interesting case study in relation to the Immigration Advisers Licensing Bill. This organisation, in response to one of its major aims, "to exert a responsible influence on the development of social policies and services, both locally and nationally" (Annual Report, 2007, p. 1), has had a long-standing practice of keeping a record of each enquiry received, collating them nationally and using them to identify issues of concern. Over a period of time, this practice revealed a high incidence of problems arising from poor advice and misinformation from immigration advisers, and CAB began a process of advocating for change which eventually resulted in the Immigration Advisers Licensing Bill. However, at this point it became evident that under its terms, bureau interviewers themselves would have to be licensed, and a new approach was made to government:

We made a case for our quality systems, told them what we do in our organisation to ensure that the service that we deliver is a quality service, all of the policies and procedures, the complaints process, the training, our membership standards, all of those things. (Kerry Dalton, CAB)

As a result of this, CAB interviewers were written into the Immigration Advisers Licensing Act (2007) as being exempt from the requirement to be licensed.

Other organisations have also found that their grassroots understanding of settlement processes has contributed to the development of new policy. For example, ESOL HT's involvement with the Tertiary Education Commission in developing learning progressions for low level foundation learning ensured that they reflected the reality of the learner groups most in need of them. RMS has successfully advocated for Housing New Zealand to recognise refugees as a priority for their initial housing needs. It is probably inevitable that the degree of response to advocacy rarely meets the extent of their hopes, and one of the roles of the NGOs is that of watch dog, keeping settlement matters, such as increased services for high risk refugee groups, before relevant government bodies.



RMS's sphere of influence extends beyond national boundaries through regular participation in consultations on the refugee resettlement process at international level, with a growing role for them in the development of international good practice, and particular interest in the balance of professional and volunteer service that they have developed.

The new climate of inter-sectoral consultation in the development of policy and action plans has been welcomed by the NGO sector in giving official recognition to their expertise.

### 4.3 Positive partnerships

Government departments have had an important role to play in many of the services that have been described in this report as contractors funding their delivery. Inevitably in this role they have also exerted an influence on their development. All of the participants had experience of working in partnership with government agencies, and appreciate an increased focus on settlement issues and expanding resources to meet them. NGOs are by nature very different from government departments, and in response to the interview question "What makes an effective partnership with a government department?" the importance of acknowledging difference was emphasised. Participants recognised that there was a process of adjustment required on both sides, as differently constituted organisations with very different past histories found ways to work together.

I think one of the challenges is that there's an NGO sector that has a long and interesting history and it's not necessarily organised in a way that government departments with a new strategy and a lot of money can be, so there's a challenge in terms of getting an effective government/ NGO dialogue where both parties are equally organised and therefore able to contribute their perspectives. So I think we're probably yet to strike that balance well. (Claire Szabó)

### Resource discrepancy

The ChangeMakers Refugee Forum's Standards for Engagement point out the great difference between the resources available to government departments and those of NGOs and ethnic communities:

In any collaboration, it is important to understand and acknowledge the differences in the amount of resources, networks and knowledge that refugee communities, NGOs and government agencies have access to. These differences affect each group's ability to work in any collaborative process. In general, government agencies have greater access to resources than NGOs and communities, and communities have less access again than NGOs. (2008b, Standard 1)

In particular, NGOs lack the bureaucratic infrastructure and sense of a secure financial future that government departments enjoy, notwithstanding the fact that any organisation is under some degree of constraint. A government contract that carries very high compliance requirements or a sense of micromanagement, especially where the funding involved does not seem proportionate, can prove very difficult for NGOs. This is exacerbated in the case of "piecemeal grants" which increase "the level and complexity of administration" (Altinkaya & Omundsen, 1999, p. 40), and deflect focus away from the provision of service which has been contracted for. Where contracts are with different government agencies, separate and incompatible databases can impose the necessity to enter data twice, another way in which sparse administrative resources can be stretched.

Timely negotiation and finalisation of contracts were mentioned as important factors for NGOs, since their ability to retain staff is often dependent on single contracts, and without clear forward security there is a danger that key personnel will look for other employment. Much of this work is specialised and benefits from depth of experience and expertise, so retention of staff is important to maintain quality.

For a small emerging agency, funding directed only to projects, and not the infrastructure that supports their sound design, implementation and evaluation, is another threat to viability, making often excessive demands of voluntary workers. This is a particular problem for refugee-background organisations, as new groups emerge to support new communities. For longer standing agencies, where ongoing programmes are funded, the point was made that NGOs, like government departments, operate in an inflationary environment, and rolling over contracts without funding increases to reflect this inevitably results in diminished service and over-stretched personnel.

Another matter relating to resources was the importance of recognition of matters of intellectual property. As a result of the responsiveness to emergent situations discussed above, the NGOs have developed processes and resources uniquely designed to meet specific needs. In spite of their commitment to the advancement of the settlement cause, recognition of what these resources represent in terms of investment, and therefore of their intellectual ownership of them, was important.

### **Differences in function**

Another issue discussed by participants was the difference between the functions of statutory bodies and NGOs operating in a non-statutory environment of confidentiality. This difference is seen as important in allowing clients to investigate their rights and responsibilities in relation to a new system in an atmosphere of trust, often preparatory to approaching the government department concerned. Forms of accountability to government funders that require the disclosure of personal information sometimes breach client confidentiality and cause concern to NGOs. However, there were positive experiences of sensitivity to these issues as well:

Being part of civil society and an independent community organisation, our organisation sees that it's absolutely fundamental to the effectiveness of our service ... it's a massive strength and if there's a complementary relationship [between government and civil society] then that's a well functioning democracy. (Kerry Dalton, CAB)

### **Development of trust**

These comments arose from past experiences of difficulty. It was certainly not the case that all had been completely solved and as has been seen ChangeMakers has made a particularly strong case for consultation processes that properly value refugee input and recognise the complexity of consultation across multiple poorly resourced groups, citing barriers such as language, the timing of meetings, the people who will be involved, and the need to avoid repetitive consultation over issues that have already been extensively recognised and documented (ChangeMakers Refugee Forum, 2008a).

Nevertheless participants also experienced positive partnerships with a sense of shared vision and mutual trust. This was particularly demonstrated in willingness on the part of the larger partner to listen to issues, and to recognise NGO responsiveness to their stakeholders as a great strength, "so I think there's been a positive change to enable a much more respectful and more equal relationship than perhaps we've had in the past" (Claire Szabó, ESOL HT).

## 5. Discussion

Various themes have developed from this examination of the contributions that NGOs make to the settlement of refugees and migrants in Aotearoa New Zealand. They arise from an essential recognition of the diversity of the migrant and refugee-background population and the necessity of designing services which acknowledge that diversity.

### Time frame

Kerry Dalton, chief executive of CAB, posed the question “What is settlement?” pointing out that migrants and refugees approach bureaux for assistance on the full range of issues that any citizen may have, and at various stages of their residence here. There is no identifiable point at which a migrant might be seen to have reached the end of the settlement process in all aspects of their life. Ho et al. (2000, p. 12) note that a distinction has been made (citing the Canadian Council for Refugees, 1989) between initial *settlement* issues and later *integration*, but where such a dividing line might be drawn within this service provision would be a challenge to decide.

It is clear that settlement is not experienced identically by all newcomers, and that new needs may occur even after they have become well settled in other areas. The Office of Ethnic Affairs’ *Ethnic perspective in policy* points out that “long term New Zealand residents who might be expected to fall into a useful policy category of ‘established migrants’ may still have need of interpreters (particularly as they grow older), or for services to be provided with some flexibility to enable them to maintain treasured and valued aspects of their culture and ethnic identity” (2002. p. 21). It was apparent that service provided by these groups is not necessarily limited to the first period of settlement, but recognises that need for support is dependent on many factors, and on different cycles of the settlement process. RMS, in its basic service provision, has given attention to the intense needs for practical assistance and welcome in the first year of settlement with integrated support from social workers, cross cultural workers and a volunteer group. It provides longer term social work support for at risk families, limited only by its capacity. Other NGOs provide a flexible service over an extended period if required, particularly in areas such as English language learning, employment and mental health.

As an example, learning a language inevitably takes a long time, and migrants and refugees may not be able to give it priority in their first period of settlement if they are beset by culture shock or pressing daily demands. ESOL HT has a very flexible approach, with no arbitrarily fixed period of service and the ability to re-enter the service as needs change.

I think what that recognises is the link between people’s language acquisition experience and their settlement experience. It’s not linear or necessarily restricted to a short time frame. So we note our learners will come for a period of time then they might reach a particular goal, go away, maybe they’ve joined the workforce, but then after a year or two or three they might come back because they can’t get their promotion, whatever it is. (Claire Szabó, ESOL HT)

This point, of the ongoing need for service, was made by a number of the participant organisations. For example, the ARMS Annual Report 2006-7 notes that it caters for a wide range of clients “from brand new arrivals to those who have been here for over 10 years,” and ChangeMakers advocates strongly for recognition that refugee issues are lingering, and that people who have suffered deep trauma can be expected to have a long-term need for mental health services.

### **Providing pathways**

However extended the period of settlement might be, it is certainly likely to change over time, and some newcomers arrive with far more skills than others. Another feature of the services was their responsiveness to different levels of needs and the way that, when seen in total, they provide potential pathways to ever increasing expression of independence in the new community. These patterns have been highlighted in relation to gaining access to general information and employment services. Another pathway process can be identified in terms of the actual sites of delivery of the service.

Home-based delivery allows programmes such as CRS’s health and social work or ESOL HT home tutoring to overcome isolating factors like lack of confidence or lack of transport. At the next level, the service is delivered in community sites where it is clear that refugees and migrants have legitimate and welcome access, that their way of communicating will be responded to, and where they can begin to see themselves as part of a community beyond their homes and their ethnic community. This can be seen as a first step to wider engagement. Examples of group services offered in this way are ESOL HT social English groups or the Ethnic Centre of the Ethnic Council of Manawatu, an NZFEC member, which is open each day for a range of activities. Transport arrangements are often a part of the service design for those not ready or able to travel independently.

At the next level the migrant centres make access to publicly available services easy for migrants and refugees seeking assistance. These differ from the group sites because in many cases clients will approach them as individuals for a one-off service, rather than as a recognised member of a group that re-forms itself regularly in the same spot. That would seem to represent a step towards greater independence.

At the final level are sites such as CAB service locations or Volunteer Wellington which are universal, in that they exist for all members of society, but which have sought to make themselves particularly welcoming to members of new communities. Being able to approach a non-targeted service with confidence is empowering for those who wish to see themselves as fully participating members of New Zealand society.

### **Characteristics of NGO provision**

It is valuable finally to consider what the NGO sector brings to the settlement arena which may be more difficult for agencies with wider briefs to achieve. The aspects which emerge from this study are in particular about connections with the client group.

### **Human connectedness**

This sense emerges from services provided by professionals from office centres and those delivered to the client's homes by volunteers. The office centres are seen as welcoming places where circumstances can be disclosed without the level of anxiety produced by a government department. NGOs have identified a number of factors contributing to this, including the advisory, explanatory, non-regulatory nature of their service; its personalised features, responding to the specific and often complex circumstances of cases and the clients' diverse frames of reference; the fact that the service is free and comprehensive; the training their staff receive in ways of making communication with migrants and former refugees accessible (including the use of interpreting services in some cases); and the accumulated expertise of staff.

Voluntary services which bring members of the host community in their roles as ordinary citizens into regular contact with migrants and former refugees are a special case, bringing an element to the resettlement process that cannot be replicated by official sources. Although participants are brought together for a service, it is a service based on understanding and responding to the everyday needs and experiences of the people involved, carrying in fact the elements of old-fashioned neighbourliness which can contribute enormously to a sense of being part of a community. Under the demands of modern life, exacerbated by an apprehension of being inappropriate and meeting rejection where one's neighbours are ethnically different, such bonds might take many years to develop in the absence of these catalysts.

### **Stakeholder responsiveness**

The point has been made that NGOs are not large bureaucracies and tend to have very open channels of communication, and mechanisms for stakeholders to contribute ideas. This means that all members of the organisation have a connectedness to the realities of the stakeholders. Even in the larger national providers, coordinators managing the local centres have a hands-on role where they are in frequent contact with both clients and paid staff or volunteers providing the service. In turn there are regular regional and national meetings where they, and often other staff and clients as well, discuss issues with people from other centres and from the national office. As a result, service providers are alert to emerging issues and have the ability to try out new services on a small local scale, as well as to reach beyond their own resources and enter into complementary partnerships where a larger response is called for. The sector is anything but static, with programmes in continual evolution.

### **Facilitation of new roles**

Successful settlement is an evolving process in which eventually one begins to identify not entirely as new arrival, but in at least some aspects of life as member of the new society. Being in a position to contribute to others and have skills recognised and appreciated is an important part of that process, and the presence of migrants or former refugees as workers in NGOs, either paid or voluntary, and at the level of governance or service provision, has increased markedly in recent times. Taking up such opportunities is driven by the personal imperatives of the individuals themselves, but the organisations have adopted specific policies to encourage and support such service. The benefits are very much mutual.

**Concern for quality**

NGOs occupy a position in the spectrum of service provision that might be seen by some to be subject to less scrutiny than the public accountability of government departments or the ongoing test of market demand. However, the participant NGOs were all clearly concerned with the maintenance of standards of provision and had habits of introspection in regard to the effectiveness of their infrastructures. The first responsibility in this respect was clearly seen as being to the client groups through channels for feedback. They have also developed explicit documented standards of service provision encapsulating their basic philosophies. They are also all engaged in external processes of accountability through contracting arrangements, through the requirements of their legal status and through accreditation processes such as NZQA for some training courses.

Within the range of settlement services that are necessary in response to an extremely complex field, NGOs, then, mark out a territory for themselves and demonstrate their ability to occupy it reliably.

## 6. Conclusion

Throughout the report, service provision has been examined in terms of what was clearly important to the service providers, in terms of government agencies' own documentation describing national objectives, and in terms of an influential model of social cohesion. It would seem that there is a strong alignment between these different models. Long-standing programmes and emergent practices at individual, community and regional level are making a huge contribution to ensuring that these goals are translated into the everyday experiences of new New Zealanders and an increasing number of host community members. This contribution is both at the quantifiable, more material end of the continuum where service statistics can be collected, and to concepts that are more difficult to define and measure which contribute to emotional integration. Consideration has also been given to optimal ways that this alignment might be recognised in cross-sectoral partnerships.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study discussed in the Introduction, to reiterate that it provides only a partial view of the NGO sector, and to highlight once more the vital contributions to resettlement from less formally constituted sources, such as members of existing ethnic communities, who are called upon to provide much of this support for family, friends and neighbours. These people are often enormously overburdened and one of the hopes of increasing visibility of services such as the regional migrant centres is that they will enable more independent access for new arrivals, or at least less complicated processes of getting the help required.

That many gaps remain is obvious and a point made strongly by ChangeMakers Refugee Forum. NGOs themselves are not exempt from their demand for more inclusive ways of operating, but there are many signs that the entire field has entered into a more collaborative method of working in the new century.

The purpose of this project has been to investigate the alignment of the work of settlement NGOs with the wider goals of resettlement in Aotearoa/New Zealand. It is hoped that it will raise awareness of the quality, range and flexibility of services offered, and the value of NGOs as partners in promoting successful settlement outcomes.

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# Appendix One: Documentation provided

The documentation provided by the participant NGO included the following items:

## **Auckland Regional Migrant Services**

Annual report, 2006-7

Service brochures, workshop and resource flyers

## **ChangeMakers Refugee Forum**

Executive Chair's Report to the Annual General Meeting, 2006/2007.

*Key issues*. Paper presented at the National Refugee Resettlement Forum, Hamilton. (2007, 29 May).

*Standards for Engagement: Guidelines for central and local government, and NGOs working with refugee background communities*. (2008).

The story of ChangeMakers Refugee Forum. (2008)

Wellington Regional Action Plan for Refugee Health and Well-being.

Media releases and information sheets

## **Christchurch Resettlement Services**

Annual report, 2007

Newsletters, 2007-2008

Information sheets, service brochures, explanatory personal communication.

## **Hamilton Multicultural Services Trust**

Annual report, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006.

Waikato Migrant Resource Centre Code of Conduct

Fraser, R. (2007). *Report 2: Gaps and interventions*. Report for Adult Mental Health Service of the Waikato District Health Board.

Hamilton Multicultural Services Trust Strategic goals, 2008-2010.

Intersect Waikato, *From welcome to citizenship: Refugee and new migrant action plan*. (2003).

Laird, Barbara. (2004). *Review of documents*.

Memorandum of Understanding between agencies (draft). Waikato Migrant Resource Centre. (2007).

What are the Principles of the WMRC?

Service Delivery Process – General Principles, HMST

Information sheets, press releases.

### **National Association of ESOL Home Tutors**

Annual report, 2006

*Connecting Cultures: Journal of ESOL Home Tutors*, Issues 7,8,10,11.

Code of Practice of the ESOL Home Tutors

Conference booklet, 2007 conference, 'Our people, our future', Wellington, 18-20 May.

Ethnic Advisory Group Terms of Reference

Key Strategies

Service statistics 2006, 2007

*Settlement through English: A history of ESOL Home Tutors*. (2006).

*So To Speak*, National Association newsletter, 3 issues from 2007

Strategic Plan, 2005-2009

### **New Zealand Federation of Citizens Advice Bureaux**

Annual report, 2006, 2007.

Client satisfaction survey – June 2006, Summarised version prepared for New Zealand Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux.

Migrants and Ethnic Groups Best Practice Guidelines

Strategic Framework 2007-2011

Service brochures, information sheets, media releases

### **New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils**

*Volunteering and ethnic communities: A dialogue with ethnic communities*. (2004).

Ethnic Centre of Manawatu service brochures

### **RMS Refugee Resettlement**

Annual report, 2004/5

*Belonging is a "feeling"*: Audiovisual presentation to Annual Tripartite Consultation on Refugees, 2006

Our strategic direction, 2007/08-2009/10.

RMS Refugee Resettlement New Zealand Volunteer Support Worker Training Manual

Wellington Regional Action Plan for Refugee Health and Well-being.

Information sheets, service brochures, posters, research reports and papers.

### **Volunteer Wellington**

Annual report, 2007

Mentoring Project Volunteer Wellington/ChangeMakers background papers

*Once upon a time: Stories about volunteers and volunteering*. (2007).

*Volunteer Wellington News*. 3 issues, 2007-8.

Service brochures