



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

EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY

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

Every year, about 50,000 migrants, refugees and their families settle in New Zealand. Some are native speakers of English; some have no English at all. Some are highly skilled and educated; some have never been to school. Support for successful settlement needs to take account of diversity.

Over the years, important aspects of that support have been embraced by non-government organisations (NGOs), responding to gaps in English language provision, employment support, mental health needs, and many other areas. The sector has developed a great depth of experience and expertise. Recently, central and local government agencies have increased their focus on the settlement needs of newcomers through a consultative process leading to the national Settlement Strategy and national and regional Action Plans, with cross-sectoral support networks in key settlement areas. NGOs welcome these moves and the opportunities they bring to share information, recognise gaps and avoid duplication of effective services.

This is the summary of a report commissioned by the largest settlement NGO, the National Association of ESOL Home Tutors, to make more visible the range of programmes offered within the NGO sector and the way that they contribute to government-led settlement goals.

NGOs participating

The report cannot provide a comprehensive picture, focusing on the work of just nine NGOs, however these organisations represent a range of types in the field.

	Scope	Began	Service	Type
Auckland Regional Migrant Services Trust (ARMS)	R	2003	P	H
ChangeMakers Refugee Forum (CMRF)	R	2003	P	E
Christchurch Resettlement Services (CRS)	R	1991	P	H
New Zealand Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux (NZACAB)	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 (VW)	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

The work of many other NGOs and less formal groups is firmly acknowledged.



Report summary

Settlement has here been defined by the goals of the New Zealand Settlement Strategy (NZSS)¹, and the Connecting Diverse Communities initiative (CDC)². The report will indicate examples of programmes at three levels, local, regional and national. These are single examples from a range of programmes available.

Supporting newcomers at the local level

Access to information and services

NZSS goal: *Migrants, refugees and their families access appropriate information and responsive services that are available in the wider community*

Obtaining appropriate services in an unfamiliar community is not easy, especially in your second language. NGOs support refugees and migrants to do this through specially targeted services and other programmes that make general services more accessible. Here are examples.

Targeted services

- **Christchurch Resettlement Services**

Social work, mental health needs, health promotion, practical resettlement; multi-ethnic, multi-skilled teams of paid staff.

Targeted service with general elements

- **Auckland Regional Migrant Services Trust**

Targeted service: Information and service centres for a wide range of settlement-related matters in single locations. **General services:** Work and Income, Career Services, etc, provide regular service on site.

Some statistics: 1,364 registered clients

General service with targeted elements

- **New Zealand Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux**

General service: Information and advice for all members of the public. **Targeted service:** Multi Lingual Information Service (MLIS), telephone interpreting in 26 languages for all CABs.

Some statistics: 18% of enquiries from non-English speaking background migrants; 20,000 MLIS enquiries, 2007.

Providing links to general service providers

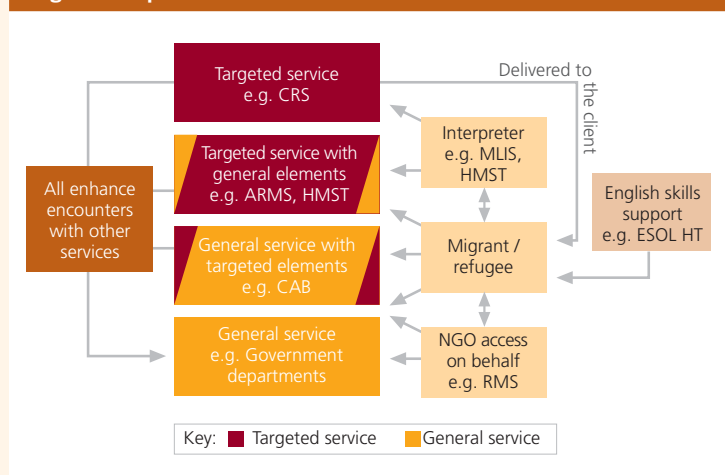
Other NGOs assist refugees and migrants to link with general service providers:

- **RMS Refugee Resettlement (RMS)**

Volunteers in small support teams make contacts on behalf of newly arrived refugees (housing, schools, banks, doctor, etc).

Some statistics: 200 to 300 families each year

Figure 1: Equitable access to information





English language skills

NZSS goal: Migrants, refugees and their families become confident using English in a New Zealand setting or are able to access appropriate language support

CDC goal: building the knowledge base

A high priority for many migrants, learning English can take a very long time. Many factors, such as family responsibility or work hours, prevent people from attending classes in formal educational institutions.

- **ESOL Home Tutors**

Weekly one-to-one and/or community group English language skills and support. Bilingual literacy classes for pre-literate refugee learners. 6 to 10 hours per week. Some statistics: 3,645 home tutor and 3,737 group learners in 2007

Employment

NZSS goal: Migrants, refugees and their families obtain employment appropriate to their qualifications and skills and are valued for their contribution to economic transformation and innovation

Skilled migrants often have great difficulty finding appropriate employment in New Zealand, and the situation is even worse for those refugees with limited formal education. There are many facets to finding employment. Here are examples of the range of ways NGOs contribute.

Pathways towards employment

- **Auckland Regional Migrant Services Trust**

Basic level service for young refugees; weekly workshops on job-seeking in the Auckland environment; specialised workshops for skilled newcomers; job mentoring for professional engineers (with Institute of Professional Engineers). Some statistics: 980 employment clients in 2007

Volunteering

Volunteering gives newcomers experience of being part of a work team in New Zealand and can lead to paid work.

- **Volunteer Wellington**

VW helps member organisations to appoint and support migrant volunteers. Some statistics: Around 40% migrants, more than 50 ethnicities in 2007.

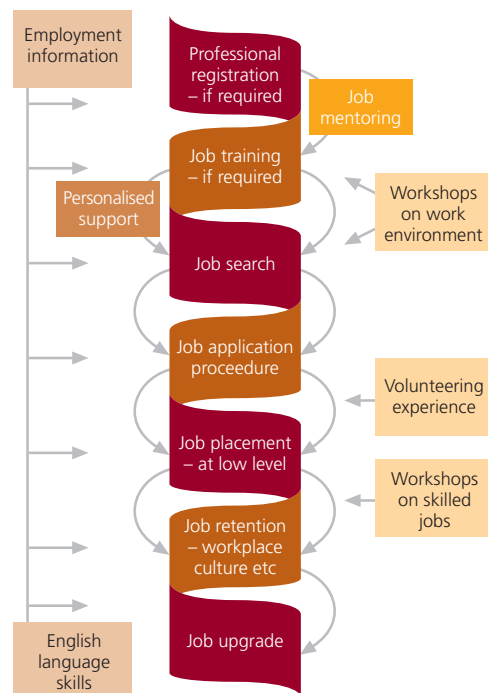
NGOs as employers

Participant NGOs recruit migrants and refugees as volunteers for service provision and in governance roles. They also employ migrants as paid workers, and have strategies to facilitate successful employment.

- **Hamilton Multicultural Services Trust**

Scholarships for trainee refugee interpreters leading to professional accreditation. High proportion of paid staff are migrant or refugee background.

Figure 2: The employment pathway



“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.”

ESOL HT governance volunteer



Emotional integration

NZSS goal: Migrants, refugees and their families feel safe within the wider community in which they live; form supportive social networks and establish a sustainable community identity

As well as practical assistance, successful settlement requires a sense of welcome and supportive connections between different communities to promote social cohesion.

Ethnic community NGOs like CMRF and NZFEC raise awareness of migrant and refugee views and needs through advocacy and participation at all levels and raise the visibility of diverse groups.

Educating the host community

NZSS goal: Successful settlement is a two-way commitment

Migrant information centres and other NGOs offer events, workshops and resources for the general public and service groups. About 4,000 volunteers are trained by these NGOs each year and participate in encounters promoting cross-cultural connections.

Collaboration and capacity building at the regional level

NZSS goal: 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

CDC goal: Improving connections with cultural identity; capacity building and community development

NGOs have been actively involved in the process of cross-sectoral regional collaboration of the current Settlement Strategy and are present as participating and lead agencies for various strands in the Action Plans. They are supportive of capacity building in refugee and migrant communities, recognising that a viable ethnic community is an important aspect of a sense of belonging that does not erase the first culture. ARMS, for example, was set up to lead effective collaboration in the Auckland region.

- **New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils**

National body for 17 regional Ethnic Councils supporting ethnic organisations within their regions, supporting first language and culture maintenance.

- **Changemakers Refugee Forum**

- **Volunteer Wellington**

CMRF is a pan-refugee NGO representing 12 refugee background communities in Wellington, active in regional collaboration. VW mentors have been matched with refugee community leaders to support capacity building.

“We may like to think of resettlement as a ‘process’ but belonging in a new country is a feeling.”

RMS staff member

“True integration requires more than life on an island in the middle of strangers.”

RMS manager

“I love it. You go there and you feel you belong.”

ESOL HT group learner

“I really wanted to know these people and you can’t just go up and force yourself on someone.”

ESOL HT tutor

“It’s not about doing the work for people, it’s about taking people on a bit of a journey, being with that person.”

Pauline Harper,
Volunteer Wellington



National level advocacy, support of quality and positive partnerships

NGOs are publicly accountable through incorporated society or trust structures, and establish regularly monitored standards of service delivery. Volunteers have NZQA-accredited targeted training, initial screening, ongoing monitoring and further training opportunities. Grassroots contact with client groups allows for small-scale responses to intense but narrowly scoped challenges.

Accumulated statistics, staff expertise, and participation in research projects contribute significantly to understanding of the field and evidence-based advocacy to policy developers. The recently formed Settlement NGOs Networking Group provides a forum for concerted advocacy.

There are longstanding partnerships between NGOs and central and local government agencies. Meagre bureaucratic and financial resources are strained when contracts have high compliance requirements, when negotiations are delayed, and when they support service but not infrastructure. However, partnerships operating in a climate of mutual trust, accepting the NGO function as non-regulatory and confidential, and recognising intellectual ownership of resources and programmes are productive and valued.

“The NGO sector 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.”

Claire Szabó, CEO, ESOL Home Tutors

“If there’s a complementary relationship between government and civil society then that’s a well functioning democracy.”

Kerry Dalton, CEO, CAB

Conclusion

In many areas of their work, NGOs and other agencies have a shared vision of resettlement. NGOs’ long-standing programmes and emergent practices at individual, community and regional level make a huge contribution to ensuring that the NZSS goals are translated into everyday experiences for new New Zealanders and host community members. The purpose of this project has been to investigate the contribution of the work of NGOs to 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.

1. Department of Labour. (2007). *Our future together*, p. 11
2. Ministry of Social Development. <http://www.msd.govt.nz/work-areas/cross-sectoral-work/connecting-diverse-communities/why.html#social>



Volunteer Wellington
A Catalyst for Community Involvement

Christchurch Resettlement Services

Hamilton Multicultural Services Trust

New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils