

The ACTR/WGR
Newsletter

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**ACTR
WGR**
ANNUAL TRIPARTITE CONSULTATIONS
and WORKING GROUP ON RESETTLEMENT



One
refugee resettled
many lives
protected

Welcome to the ATCR/WGR Newsletter

Dear Colleagues

Welcome to the first ATCR/WGR newsletter for 2012. Australia is very excited to have assumed the role of Chair and we are busy preparing to welcome delegates to the upcoming WGR meeting in Melbourne, Australia, from 19-24 February 2012. There will be a full program for those of you joining us on this occasion, and we look forward to showcasing Australia's refugee settlement services and introducing delegates to recently resettled refugees. Hopefully, delegates will identify some lessons which may be applied in their own countries.

This year's agenda is focused around the theme '*One Refugee Resettled, Many Lives Protected*' – acknowledging the importance of each and every resettlement place governments can provide. Resettlement is a mechanism for protection that has a 'ripple effect' in helping the wider refugee population, and forums such as the WGR and ATCR are an important opportunity for governments, NGOs and UNHCR to work together to expand and improve programs around the world. Australia is committed to assisting efforts by UNHCR and other resettlement countries to increase resettlement places globally. We will continue to support the innovative and collaborative approach that has come to define the ATCR and WGR meetings.

In this issue of the newsletter, you will find articles spanning the resettlement continuum – from international cooperation and support for establishing new programs; to initiatives ensuring integrity in application processing; stories from settlement service providers; and initiatives that are helping ensure refugees can settle successfully into their new communities.

It has been a pleasure compiling this edition of the newsletter and reading about so many positive things happening in the world of resettlement. We were not able to use all the articles we received, however, we will keep them for the next edition. We hope you find this an interesting read and look forward to receiving more articles for the next edition.

Jim O'Callaghan
Assistant Secretary, Humanitarian Branch
Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship
Chair

Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement / Working Group on Resettlement



Jim O'Callaghan participates in an Australian Cultural Orientation (AUSCO) class in Nepal for Bhutanese refugees preparing to travel to Australia – October 2011

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EU and transatlantic cooperation to support new resettlement countries

In recent times many European countries have joined the global family of resettlement countries offering new beginnings to refugees and more are planning to join them in the coming years.

The experiences of these new members of the resettlement family have shown that successful resettlement needs more than just the goodwill of the host country. It also requires a mix of resilience and skills from the refugees themselves, as well as good targeted support services and a welcoming host society willing to embrace the refugees as part of their community. More broadly, it requires a cooperative approach between resettlement countries to provide support and share the lessons learned.

The first year after arrival is particularly important to the long term success of resettlement. It is critical to carefully plan this first reception and integration phase. Some countries are not only new to resettlement but also have little experience with the reception and integration of refugees or other third country nationals. This can create significant challenges in developing appropriate frameworks and services to support vulnerable groups with few resources of their own.

Established resettlement countries are ideally placed to share their expertise and show good practices. This may be done through bilateral cooperation or in the framework of multilateral projects and activities. In Europe, two such projects have been funded under the European Refugee Fund, and one has been initiated by the US Mission to the EU.

Practical cooperation

The 'Practical Cooperation in EU Resettlement Project' facilitated cooperation activities between governmental and non-governmental representatives from 10 EU member states.

The project ran from January 2010 until September 2011 and was implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) with funding from the European Refugee Fund. The main objective of the project was the promotion of cooperation and sharing of good practices by all resettlement actors, both at national and local levels. It involved established resettlement countries (Sweden, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom) as well as those that had begun resettlement activities more recently (France, Belgium, Romania and Portugal) and countries that had not yet engaged in resettlement (Hungary, Poland and Slovakia).

All stages of the resettlement process were covered from joint selection missions to exchange of best practices in the reception and integration of resettled refugees.

The first meeting took place at the Emergency Transit Center (ETC) in Timisoara, and was followed by study visits, training, pilot activities and publications. This included a study visit by representatives from Belgium, Portugal and Sweden to the UNHCR Resettlement Hub in Beirut. The visit was intended to promote resettlement on the basis of dossier submissions, as an essential part of EU resettlement programmes, and improve the processing time and acceptance rate of dossiers. Following this visit, the Belgian government put their new expertise into practice, resettling refugees from Shousha camp in Tunisia on the basis of dossier submissions.

As part of the project, a pilot to undertake resettlement interviews by video conferencing (VCT) was facilitated by the Dutch government. VCT equipment was set up at the ETC where Eritrean refugees were connected to interviewers in the Netherlands, with observers from the Hungarian government. This pilot proved to be successful and the Dutch government has issued a report containing the main outcomes and recommendations.

Training was conducted in Sintra, Portugal, by ICMC for 30 local practitioners from 14 European countries, to map different integration challenges, practices, tools and expected outcomes. The training emphasized that there is no one size fits all model in the resettlement process. It offered a platform for exchange between practitioners and was an important step forward in creating a common understanding of the needs of refugees when arriving in their new home countries.

The information gained during the training was published in 'Paving the Way – a handbook on the reception and integration of resettled refugees' which was researched and written by ICMC during 2011. The publication includes resettlement practices from across Europe and beyond (see www.icmc.net/article/new-handbook-provides-rich-inspiration).

To complement formal training, the project facilitated on-site learning by participants through study visits to Sweden and the UK. The challenges presented by the pre-departure and post-arrival phase of resettlement were the focus of the visit to Sweden. The visit to Sheffield and Manchester focused on UK government and NGO cooperation, and looked at local authority and NGO partnerships.

Multi-stakeholder meetings were also held in the ten EU countries involved. These meetings brought together a wide range of people working on resettlement, including government officials selecting refugees, representatives from local municipalities and NGOs involved in the reception and integration of refugees.

The project strongly reinforced that the key for successful resettlement activities is proper coordination and planning by all actors concerned.

Linking in EU Resettlement project

At the conclusion of the project, it was clear that there is a significant need and demand for further cooperation with regard to reception and integration at the local level.

Following from the success of the Practical Cooperation Project, a new ERF-project called 'Linking in EU Resettlement' has been initiated. The project, which has been sponsored by IOM, ICMC and UNHCR, will run until the end of 2012. Over 15 EU Member States will participate in the project which has a primary focus on information sharing in the field of reception and integration of resettled refugees, and the importance of linking the phases of resettlement.

The project will build on the successes of the Practical Cooperation Project, and will continue to incorporate targeted training for local resettlement practitioners and continued engagement of actors through multi-stakeholder meetings. It will also expand to include the development of an online community of resettlement practitioners to facilitate online information-sharing.

The central event of the follow up project is the European Resettlement Skills Share Day, which will bring together 100 policy-makers, opinion-leaders and practitioners from across Europe and beyond. This event is scheduled to take place in April 2012. The Skills Share Day will be an opportunity to showcase the entire resettlement process with UNHCR presenting priority refugee situations and resettlement needs, governments explaining the different selection methods, IOM, governments, NGOs and local authorities demonstrating pre-departure and cultural orientation practices and reception and integration models and best practices.

For more information on the pilot activities and the project in general, please check the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR) website at www.unhcr.org/atcr.

US – EU Partnerships in resettlement

The US-EU Partnership in Resettlement, initiated by the US Mission to the EU in Brussels, aims to foster exchanges between traditional European resettlement countries, new European resettlement countries, and the USA.

In March 2011, the US Mission facilitated a 10-day voluntary visitors program for a group of nine EU representatives to observe the reception and integration arrangements for resettled refugees in different cities in the USA. The focus of the visit was the involvement of NGOs and volunteer organizations in these arrangements. Government representatives from Denmark, Hungary and Poland were accompanied by representatives of European NGOs (CCME, ECRE and ICMC), the European Commission and UNHCR. The study visit was followed by a seminar in Brussels during which the observations of the visit were discussed with resettlement actors and other representatives from EU Member States.

*Johannes van Gemund
Resettlement Policy Officer
UNHCR Bureau for Europe*



The Refugees of the World

We are from the jungles, from vast deserts, high mountains,
deep valleys, extended plains and bright skies.

We are the children of the humble, the generous, the brave,
the kind people with bright hearts so white.

We are from the cradle of civilizations, its source of humanity, victimization,
exploitation, the beginning of colonization and its demise.

We are living proof of the world's injustices, its battle fields,
its political games and sacrifice.

We are the cries, we're the sorrows, we're the suffering,
but portrayed as a symbol of despair and disguise.

We are artists whose creativity, love and passion for nature and a peaceful world
is reflected in our words, in our dances in our songs in our laughs,
our melodies and our sighs.

We are part of the global migrant history,
a tale of shared experiences of hope and alienation, fear and acceptance
– it is the search for peace, prosperity and a better life.

But also we are the challenge, we're the hope, we're the future,
a living testimony of survival, resilience, of joy and of life.

We are against all violence, intolerance, injustices and discrimination,
we're for fairness, equality, dignity and humanity
and from the rubbles of injustices we rise and rise and rise.

We are the refugees of the world.

*Dr Melika Yassin Sheikh-Eldin, 2007
Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES), Australia*

Expanding the UNHCR-NGO Toolkit: call for good practices, ideas and cooperation

The UNHCR-NGO Toolkit for Practical Cooperation on Resettlement was launched during the 2011 Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement. The toolkit is aimed at helping UNHCR and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to strengthen their partnerships and cooperate on resettlement activities. It serves as a repository of practices and tools on resettlement and is freely available.

The toolkit includes practical guidance for UNHCR and NGOs on how to enhance cooperation in areas of operational activities, community outreach, as well as information sharing, planning and advocacy. The toolkit provides examples of such partnerships in action, both historical and current, to elicit good practices and favour build-on actions based on earlier joint efforts. UNHCR is currently expanding the toolkit to include practices and tools in the areas of reception and integration of resettled refugees.

Although practical cooperation in these areas between UNHCR and NGOs already exists, the toolkit is expected to assist UNHCR, NGOs and other resettlement partners in exploring further partnerships. These would include sharing information about, and cooperating on, projects related to pre-departure and post-arrival activities such as:

- cultural orientation;
- language training;
- reception arrangements;
- support services (language learning, housing, employment, health, education, community work and participation); and
- provision of support to specific groups of people (e.g. people with disabilities, women and children at risk, people with medical needs, survivors of violence and/or torture, and older people).

One example of a successful partnership is the 'Paving the Way' Handbook on the Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees in Europe.¹ The handbook was developed in the framework of a project that was supported by the European Refugee Fund and prepared by the European Office of the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC). It presents a range of recommendations to guide national, regional and local policy makers and practitioners in refugee resettlement.

¹ The Handbook is available on-line at:
www.icmc.net/system/files/publication/paving_the_way_a_handbook_on_the_reception_and_in_56768.pdf
(December 2011).

Another is the 'Linking-In EU Resettlement' project which brings together the efforts and depth of experience from UNHCR, IOM and the ICMC. The project aims to strengthen the expertise of European practitioners in all stages of the resettlement and integration process by building a network of resettlement practitioners and actors both in participating member states and more broadly across the EU. Through this network Linking-In EU Resettlement aims to facilitate capacity-building and information sharing activities.²

How to contribute to the toolkit

As you are aware, the next Working Group on Resettlement (WGR) meeting will be 20-23 February 2012. The meeting will focus on the integration of resettled refugees. UNHCR therefore encourages resettlement partners, and NGO partners in particular, to take advantage of this opportunity by contributing additional materials such as templates, tools, and field examples in the area of reception and integration to further enhance the toolkit. In addition to materials related to reception and integration activities, resettlement partners are welcome to share their knowledge and expertise on any of the other issues covered by the toolkit.

Please provide any contributions for inclusion in the toolkit before the February WGR. Contributions should be sent to the toolkit administrator at unhcr.ngotoolkit@gmail.com.

For more information, please visit www.unhcr.org/ngotoolkit.

Portable biometrics kit to improve the integrity of Australia's resettlement program

The Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship now has the capacity to collect biometric data from visa applicants anywhere an officer can travel. Many humanitarian visa applicants, such as those in refugee camps, cannot visit a biometrics collection facility, so a mobile solution had to be found. Officers around the world are being equipped with portable kits that allow them to take fingerprint and facial scans in the field or at Australian overseas missions at the time of interview. Each kit weighs around 17 kg and packs into a wheeled, heavy-duty suitcase that can be transported as checked luggage on an aircraft. The kits improve the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's ability to 'lock in' clients' identity and reduce opportunities for identity fraud in later visa applications and other dealings with government.

² More information can be found in the project newsletter: www.icmc.net/system/files/news/linking_in_newsletter_1_november_2011_52889.pdf

UNHCR pioneers a new online integration evaluation tool in Central Europe

UNHCR's Regional Representation in Central Europe (RRCE) has surveyed integration practices in that region and outlined its policy position on integration issues in two new documents: the Agenda and the Note on Integration of Refugees in Central Europe.³ UNHCR has identified ongoing challenges to integration. Education, employment and housing are particularly problematic, but lack of data has prevented a comprehensive assessment. UNHCR in Central Europe, in partnership with the Migration Policy Group, has developed the online Integration Evaluation Tool (IET). The IET is a web-based data system which will gather information, identify gaps and measure progress in relation to refugee integration. In developing the tool, UNHCR held roundtable discussions throughout 2010 with NGOs and government officials from Bulgaria, Poland, Slovakia and Romania, where the tool will be piloted.

The integration indicators in the IET are based on EU and international policies and legal standards. The general indicators examine the impact of reception conditions on integration, as well as infrastructure for mainstreaming refugees and their special needs into different public policies. Indicators related to legal integration assess issues concerning residency rights, family unity and reunification, and access to an effective nationality. Socio-economic integration indicators explore housing, employment, lifelong learning, health and public and social security. Finally, socio-cultural integration looks into child education, language learning and social orientation, and building bridges and fostering participation.

The tool is set up in such a way that the relevant authorities can enter information only in their areas of expertise, for example, legal experts, educational experts, policy analysts and project evaluators. It is intended to generate dialogue and further advancement of the integration policies and programmes, as it shows what can be improved, as well as which are the best practices.

As well as developing the frameworks and the IET, the RRCE and country offices have made extensive efforts to research and address specific thematic areas in integration such as access to education, housing and employment. In 2011, the RRCE was engaged in a regional study of access to education by asylum-seeker and refugee children in Central Europe. At the conclusion of the study, RRCE organized a conference bringing together UNHCR, government and NGO partners from the seven Central European countries. The conference resulted in a report which summarises the challenges and best practices.⁴

³ UNHCR Agenda for the Integration of Refugees in Central Europe can be found at www.unhcr-centraleurope.org/pdf/what-we-do/promoting-integration/unhcrs-agenda-for-the-integration-of-refugees-in-central-europe.html

UNHCR Note for Refugee Integration in Central Europe can be found at www.unhcr-centraleurope.org/pdf/what-we-do/promoting-integration/unhcrs-note-on-the-integration-of-refugees-in-central-europe.html

⁴ Improving Access to Education for Asylum-Seeker, Refugee Children and Adolescents in Central Europe accessed at www.unhcr-centraleurope.org/pdf/what-we-do/caring-for-vulnerable-groups/education-of-refugee-children/improving-access-to-education.html

The work on integration in the Central European countries is part of a response to the expressed needs of beneficiaries of international protection. On a regular basis, the RRCE and country offices have been engaged in advocating age, gender and diversity mainstreaming which includes participatory assessments with refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection. This is an ongoing process where UNHCR works closely with government colleagues as well as NGO partners and meets persons of concern, refugees and asylum-seekers to discuss their situation in the country of asylum. Most of these meetings having been completed, UNHCR is now consolidating the findings and will be producing country-specific reports. While the findings will provide recommendations for the country's policies and programmes, the process itself immediately highlights the key issues.

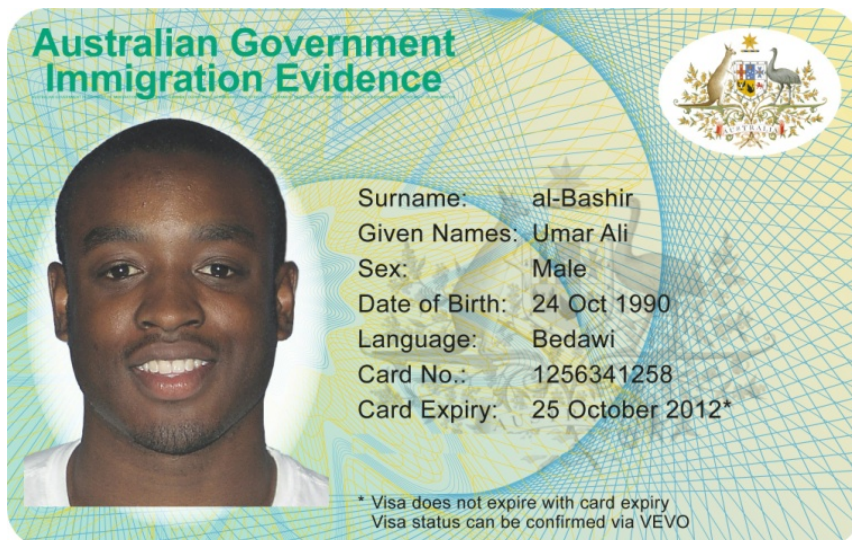
More information on the work of UNHCR in Central Europe, including the mentioned reports, can be found at www.unhcr-centraleurope.org/en/index.html

*Magdalena Smieszek
Regional Integration officer
RRCE*

New documentation for humanitarian entrants

From late 2012, the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship will begin to issue a new immigration evidence card to people granted visas under the Humanitarian Program. The card will replace the visa evidence documents that are issued to humanitarian entrants and successful asylum seekers when they are granted their visa. The secure plastic card will be printed with a passport-sized photograph, basic biodata, preferred language and a unique identification number that links to the client's immigration records.

The new card will standardise the documentation issued to people granted Humanitarian visas and reduce fraud, because of the security features and biometric data. It will also help holders access government services to which they are entitled.



Preliminary Card Design

Refugees from six decades gather in Washington for landmark congress

In August 2011, refugees representing six decades gathered in Washington DC to discuss the challenges that refugees face around the world.

In his address to the congress Vincent Cochetel, UNHCR's Washington-based regional representative, said that 'Today, we have heard refugees speaking for themselves and making policy recommendations that will hopefully influence how integration programmes are designed, implemented and evaluated.' The participants were testament to the United States' long humanitarian tradition of hospitality and protection, he said.

The historic event brought together 60 refugees and asylum seekers from across the United States to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the 1951 Convention. The event featured one refugee from each of the 50 states and ten notable refugees. The refugees originate from all over the world and have survived unspeakable atrocities.

Their stories reflect the resilience of refugees over the past 60 years, each has gone on to make a remarkable contribution to their community. They included activists, artists, government officials, authors and resettlement agency workers. During the course of the congress, they offered their unique insights on their successes and challenges and shared their ideas on how to improve the protection and lives of refugees here and around the world.

Fatuma

'People need more time and assistance to integrate in the United States', said Fatima Elmi, a delegate from Minneapolis, Minnesota. 'The Refugee Congress is helping to provide recommendations for how to best make that happen.' She welcomed the discussion at the congress on the challenges that resettled refugees face, and their needs.

Fatuma, who now works for the Lutheran Social Services, fled Somalia in 1991. Twenty years later, her country is still enduring appalling suffering. Tens of thousands of people have fled their homes this year in Somalia to escape fighting, persecution and the worst drought in the region in more than half-a-century. 'As a Somali, it is heartbreaking to see what is happening', she said.

At the conclusion of the congress, the refugee delegates unanimously approved a proclamation which includes several recommendations developed during the congress. These address different aspects of refugee protection, from resettlement to refugees advocating on behalf of other refugees. Following the congress, participants shared their experiences with their congressional representatives and presented them with the proclamation.

For more information on the refugee congress, or to read the biographies of all sixty delegates, visit www.unrefugees.org/refugeecongress.

UNHCR RO Washington DC



Delegates at the Refugee Congress in Washington, 3-4 August 2011

Snapshots from Oz

Snapshots from Oz is a series of five three-minute films on key settlement/integration issues facing young humanitarian entrants to Australia. The Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) in Melbourne, which produced the films on behalf of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, drew on the experiences of recently arrived young people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and young people in a Thai refugee camp. Five main themes – perceptions of Australia; community, culture and housing; learning technologies; school and language; and pathways to work and study – arose from the consultations. Each theme was presented in a different genre – animation, drama, comedy skit – designed to appeal to young people. The final product is a vibrant and exciting settlement/integration resource for people of all ages.



Good advice

Abebe was forced to escape from Ethiopia due to his beliefs. After fleeing Ethiopia he was resettled as a refugee in the United States, where he has been living for the last few years.

Back in Ethiopia, Abebe had been trained as a mechanical engineer and before his escape had looked forward to a thriving and successful life in his country. After his arrival in the United States he found work in the Washington DC region as a cashier at a gas station. This allowed him to pay his rent, cover the most important and basic needs, and lead a normal life. Despite this he kept dreaming of getting back into his professional field, where his technical skills and professional educational background could be used.

Abebe was put in contact with the Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area (LSS/NCA). His Employment Advocate at the LSS/NCA understood his anxieties and helped him to revise his resumé and prepare several job applications in his specialized field. They also helped him with networking, a social feature that, although often taken for granted, can be a rare and precious commodity in the life of refugees.

The LSS/NCA recently received this email from Abebe:

Friend, long time. I got a professional job in a very good aerospace company. It has a very good working condition, excellent opportunities, and good pay. Thanks for all the support you provided to me and my family throughout those difficult times. You and your friends at your agency are God-sent angels helping people passing difficult times. Abebe

When LSS/NCA wrote to congratulate him, they asked him if he would like to share some advice with other refugees facing similar circumstances and challenges. Here is what Abebe wrote back:

The secret, if at all it is a secret, is persistence. I have to keep on applying 10 to 20 applications per week for more than two years (Can you believe that?). And then you may get interviews (either phone interviews and/or on-site interviews) and THEN REJECTIONS. You still should keep on applying, 10 to 20 per week. And then one day boom, there it is, you get an offer from an interview you did maybe 3 months ago. ...America really is a land of opportunity, but the opportunity does not materialize overnight and nor without a purposeful focused effort. Abebe

*Summer Parrish
Director of Development and Communications
Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area (LSS/NCA)
Northern VA Office*

On the road to a new home in the Netherlands

One day you're in Beirut, Damascus or Khartoum, the next you're on a plane to Schiphol. Every year around 500 refugees begin a new life in the Netherlands.

Preparation for the refugees' arrival is thorough. In the case of selection missions, a variety of Dutch organisations, each with its own job to do, work closely together to select refugees referred by UNHCR as a group. The refugees are assessed against Dutch requirements, a social profile is prepared and medical advice obtained. The Dutch intake also includes around 100 refugees referred by UNHCR on an individual basis.

The Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA), an independent administrative body funded by the Dutch Government, is responsible for the social profiles and prepares the selected refugees for their departure to the Netherlands. Until 2011, newly-arrived refugees would spend four to six months at a reception centre run by COA. Now they receive expanded training before departure and on arrival travel straight to their new home where the municipality delivers services such as education, health care and social work.

In most cases, refugees are moved to a municipality in groups of around twenty. The main advantage of housing them in groups is the social support they can offer each other. From the municipality's point of view, it is more practical to organise social services for a group than for individuals arriving at different times. Group placement also helps the municipalities fulfill their obligation to take a certain number of refugees each year.

Introduction to the Netherlands

Before departure, refugees have plenty of time to prepare for their resettlement. COA offers them three courses in cultural orientation, each of which lasts six or seven half-days. They learn about daily life in the Netherlands, the city or village they will live in and their future home.

Self-reliance

The knowledge a refugee has on arrival in the Netherlands varies from individual to individual. 'It differs whether someone is from a city or the rural side of a country', says Andre Baas, Project Manager Resettled Refugees at COA. 'The profile of resettled refugees has changed over the last [few] years. We used to deal with refugees that had lived in refugee camps for years. The refugees we select nowadays mainly come from urban areas. They are in general more used to municipal services.'

The aim of the training is to empower people to live independently in the Netherlands and to teach them the basics of the Dutch language. Baas says: 'Differences are there, but the challenge is to empower them as much as possible, so they will be self-reliant'.

Stories from AUSCO classes around the world

The Australian Cultural Orientation (AUSCO) program is the beginning of the settlement journey for refugees preparing to settle in Australia.

The course provides an introduction to Australia which enhances the settlement prospects of refugees by helping to create realistic expectations for their life in Australia and teaching them about Australian culture before they arrive.

Trainers target the courses to four main groups including adults, youth, children and pre-literate entrants. Here is a collection of stories from some of the classes held around the world in October 2011.

Africa

A session held in Nairobi was attended by a middle aged woman who was upset and kept walking out of the class. When the trainer asked what was troubling her, it transpired that she had lost many of her relatives during the Rwandan genocide.

The trainer helped create a safe and encouraging learning environment for her and she was able to share her problems and fears. She was reassured that she would be safe once she arrived in Australia and the trainer told her about the wide range of support available for traumatised people. With her concerns allayed, the woman was then able to fully engage in the training.



Participants identifying their destination on the Australian map.

Thailand

During the 'Journey to Australia' session which covers what to expect when travelling by plane, one participant said, 'This was a great relief for me. I thought there would be only three of us in the whole aeroplane! Now I know that at least there will be other passengers and travelling by plane does not seem to be as scary as I thought.'

Another class was a one-day refresher course as the family had attended AUSCO in November 2009 but their departure had been cancelled. The family eagerly got in touch with AUSCO prior to departure from Nupo Camp and asked if they could attend an AUSCO class again as they felt they had forgotten all the important information given to them previously.



Participants engaging in an education levels versus job types activity

Malaysia

On the last day of a youth class the trainer used drama techniques to encourage and explore body movement and language and vocal use. The students were asked to act out what they thought their first day at school would be like and what it would be like after six months. This session was very well received. In fact, the feedback was that this was the students' favourite session.



The trainer in Malaysia discussing beach attire and water safety with participants

Middle East

The special challenges for new arrivals adapting to the different social norms of their adopted country were highlighted in Tehran for a 13 year old boy who found it difficult to understand that men and women are equal and have equal rights in Australia. When he learned that his sister would be allowed to take off her head scarf if she wanted to, he became very upset. Eventually he decided to try to accept the notions of his new country.



Children play with Australian animal hand puppets

Nepal

During a class for children aged between 5 and 12 years of age, the trainer asked the older children what they knew about Australia and what they wanted to know. They had many ideas about how to use the toilet and how to dial 000 in an emergency. The trainer then asked them to share this knowledge and teach it to the younger children.

They did a great job and one boy aged 11 said 'I am so happy I got a chance to teach someone today. I am a teacher now!'

The trainer reflected that a simple exercise of this nature helped create confidence and excitement in the children, when they realised they can make a contribution to their new country.



A family role-play how they will overcome culture shock.

The Developing Communities Pilot Project

For Muhama Yotham, a new start in Adelaide, the capital of South Australia, offered safety and freedom after his escape from Burundi's civil war and years in a Tanzanian refugee camp. Burundians began arriving in Adelaide in 2004, and whilst this gave them new opportunities, there were also new challenges to confront. In a two-year pilot project funded by the Australian Government under the Settlement Grants Program, the Burundians found a mentor in the Vietnamese community, which decades earlier faced and overcame similar challenges.

'The mentoring program was very useful because the experiences of the Vietnamese were almost the same for people from Burundi and other African countries in that they didn't speak English', Muhama said. 'Many of the new arrivals from Burundi were struggling in their own language, let alone English. But we could draw inspiration from the Vietnamese community. They have achieved a lot in South Australia – you only have to look at all of the shops, restaurants and the professional associations they have established'.

Lan Mong Nguyen of the Vietnamese Community in Australia, South Australia Chapter, understood the journey ahead of the Burundian community and was willing to help. Working together, the Vietnamese and Burundian communities strengthened governance structures and learned how to adapt to their own community training on a range of issues including mental health, law and order, domestic violence and drugs and alcohol. 'The training equipped the Burundian community with the knowledge and leadership skills to deal with social issues', Lan said.

'You really need strong leadership. When people come to a new country, they feel lost, particularly if they don't speak English. There's a real culture shock. It makes such a difference to have someone from your own culture explain social issues and how laws apply to people. Otherwise people will listen to information from a service provider and think: "this is the Australian people's way of life"'.

Lan said having a mentor made an enormous difference in achieving positive settlement outcomes. 'I can see what we in the Vietnamese community had to do over a twenty-year period and I've seen the Burundian community achieve this in two years.

Muhama said the mentoring project has given people the blueprint to building community independence and resilience. 'By working in partnership with the Vietnamese community, we are now in a better position to apply for grants, to manage staff and administer payroll systems. Our peak body – the Association of the Burundian Community in South Australia – now has an office, two part-time staff and about thirty volunteers. We have people graduating from university and TAFE [technical and further education colleges] and more than forty percent of the men are employed in different industries. Burundians are also building a strong reputation as volunteers', he said.

Muhama hopes to continue the mentoring ethos to build stronger and more supportive communities in South Australia. The mentoring program has taken us to the next level. And it's not just helping the Burundian community. We are also helping people who have arrived from Rwanda, Congo and Sudan', he said. 'In the future, it is our wish to mentor another new and emerging community in Adelaide'.

Local initiatives supporting refugee settlement/integration in Melbourne

The February WGR meeting in Melbourne, Australia, will feature two days of site visits to different locations and services around Melbourne and regional Victoria. Some of the settlement/integration support services and projects that WGR participants will be able to see and hear about include:

Bringing local communities on board

Refugee welcome zones

A [refugee welcome zone](#) is a local government area which has made a commitment in spirit to welcoming refugees into the community, upholding the human rights of refugees, demonstrating compassion for refugees and enhancing cultural and religious diversity in the community. This public commitment is also an acknowledgment of the tremendous contributions refugees have made to Australian society. The refugee welcome zone initiative began in June 2002 as part of Refugee Week celebrations and was an initiative of the Refugee Council of Australia. At the time, 15 councils and shires were declared refugee welcome zones. Today, 75 local government areas across Australia have declared themselves refugee welcome zones. The initiative has proven to be a great success in connecting local governments with the issues facing refugees and asylum seekers.

Localities Embracing and Accepting Diversity (LEAD) Project

[LEAD](#) is a three year pilot project working across the whole community that complements existing activity to support minority cultural groups. It has a particular emphasis on addressing responses to those most affected by discrimination, namely Aboriginal, refugee and migrant community members. LEAD seeks to create a more inclusive community that is proud of its strong cultural diversity and values the differences that exist between us but also acknowledge what is common to all. Following an extensive planning and development phase during 2009 and 2010, Greater Shepparton City Council selected four areas for action: the council itself, education, employment and sport and recreation. These areas are working towards pro-diversity organisational change, awareness raising education programs, diversity training and building leadership and advocacy.

Education support for refugee children

Homework clubs and Learning Beyond the Bell

Homework clubs or programs exist across Australia to support refugee young people with their education needs. They offer extra learning support to disadvantaged young people who may have had disrupted education and receive limited study assistance at home. Homework programs are held in schools, libraries and community centres and are often run by volunteers. They help students with their literacy and homework, help build confidence and provide a safe place to study. In Victoria, the state government has funded the [Learning Beyond the Bell](#) initiative to assist homework programs to provide high quality tuition and learning support to young people.

Embrace Education

[Embrace Education](#) is a non-profit organisation run by university students that offers free educational support to disadvantaged high school students. Started and run mostly by volunteers, its main focus is on tutoring and mentoring students from refugee and recent migrant backgrounds. This occurs through [several programs](#) including Homework Clubs, In-School Tutoring and Individual Tutoring. The program also provides textbooks, calculators, stationery and other items to students in need.

Transitions to employment

Given the Chance – training and employment

[Given the Chance](#) is a training and employment program developed by a not-for-profit community organisation (The Brotherhood of St Laurence) that provides refugees with support moving into work. It is designed for those who are ready to enter the Australian workforce but lack the local experience and awareness of work culture needed to find and maintain employment. Given the Chance takes a whole-of-community approach to tackling issues and barriers to refugees entering the workforce, with business, government and the community working together to help refugees find and keep jobs. The program involves specialised case management, pre-employment training, supported business and personal mentoring and employment opportunities. More than two-thirds of Given the Chance participants go on to find employment or undertake study to improve their chances of finding work and build useful skills.

Werribee Growers Project – market gardening

This project marks a successful partnership between a Karen Burmese community association and an integration/settlement agency ([AMES](#)), working with four market garden enterprises in Werribee in Melbourne’s outer west. Market gardening is a key industry and employer in the local area. AMES arranged for newly arrived refugees to fill farmers’ requirements and pick vegetables in local market gardens. AMES negotiated with growers to ensure minimum wage and conditions for workers, and established and managed all labour hire arrangements.

The Sorghum Sisters – Catering Business

WGR participants will be able to hear about and see a number of social enterprises in action that have been set up to assist refugees to gain valuable skills and work experience in Australia. Social enterprises featured include [The Sorghum Sisters](#), an initiative born in the kitchen of a local primary school in 2005. It evolved from the need expressed by the African community in a local housing estate to find creative ways of surmounting their barriers to employment and social engagement. A series of consultations highlighted the strong passion and skills for cooking by the African women, seeding the idea of establishing a local catering social enterprise specialising in African cuisine. The Sorghum Sisters catering enterprise has been successfully operating and expanding since then.



The Sorghum Sisters run a successful catering business in Melbourne

The contribution of humanitarian entrants to Australian society

On behalf of the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship, demographer Professor Graeme Hugo of the University of Adelaide has conducted a study on the economic, social and civic contributions of first and second generation humanitarian entrants to Australia. The focus of the research was humanitarian entrants, using holders of family and skilled visas as comparison groups. Indicators of contribution, such as labour force participation, were examined in cohorts of humanitarian entrants over time.

This research is helping the government develop a sound evidence base from which to understand the impact of the Humanitarian Program on our society. It also gives us a better understanding of the progress made by humanitarian entrants over the longer term and suggests improvements that can be made to services.

The picture which emerges from Professor Hugo's report is a largely positive one. There is clear evidence of upward mobility, although there is a minority who are trapped for an extended period in low paid, low status employment niches in the 'secondary labour market'.

A common theme among key informants, from both government and non-government sectors, is the notion of 'sacrifice'. This underlies the tendency of humanitarian entrants to work hard in menial and low skilled jobs in order to ensure their children receive tertiary education. Due to the hard work and determination of their parents, the second generation experiences higher levels of post-school education and greater success in the labour force.

The report found that there are definite trends of convergence towards Australian-born levels of labour market success within the first generation and beyond those levels for some second generation groups.

There will be more about these research findings at the QGR in February 2012.

The full report is available online at

www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/research/pdf/economic-social-civic-contributions-about-the-research2011.pdf.

A virtual community of resettled refugees

2011 marked the sixtieth anniversary of both UNHCR and the UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. To celebrate the courage of the millions of refugees who have started new lives over the last sixty years, UNHCR and the University of Geneva have developed a new kind of social network – a website to give a special voice to resettled refugees worldwide, where they and their descendants can tell their story, share photos and reconnect with others.

Resettled refugee communities in Australia, Canada and the United States will be encouraged to register first. The website will then be opened up to resettled refugee communities worldwide in partnership with NGOs and settlement agency partners.

The project will highlight the success and challenges of our newest community members, and will help remind the nations of the world to keep their borders and their hearts open so that the displaced and the dispossessed can still find safe haven, hope and opportunity.



Worldwide Community for Resettled Refugees

A project developed by UNHCR and the University of Geneva for the benefit of all resettled refugees worldwide



Member login

Username:

Password:

Login

[Request new password](#)

WELCOME TO THE HOME FOR RESETTLED REFUGEES

You need to get an invitation from a member of the community in order to join and login.

Members can search for other resettled refugees and receive regular information from UNHCR.

YOUR FRIENDS



Trace relatives and friends who have registered

YOUR NEW LIFE



Show everyone you have a new life you can be proud of

YOUR STORY



Tell your story to your children, to your grandchildren and their children.

WORLDWIDE COMMUNITY



Become an integral part of your new nation's population