

Wellington Refugee Youth Issues Summary

Backgrounder for Wellington people working with
refugee-background youth

**Tessa Johnstone and Muigai Kimani with support of ChangeMakers Refugee Forum and Wellington
Refugees As Survivors Trust**

June 2010

A summary of refugee-background youth issues as researched over the last five years; a starting point for promoting ACTION on the issues.

Contents

	Page
Introduction	3
Who are 'refugee-background youth'?	3
How we identified the issues	3
The Issues	
Access to Youth Services	4
Culture and Identity	6
Education	
Secondary	8
Tertiary	12
Employment	14
Family	16
Gangs and Youth Crime	18
Health	20
Housing	22
ID/Documentation	24
Language	25
Safety and Security	27
Sport and Recreation	29
Social Activities	31
Youth Development Opportunities	32
Sources	34
About Refugee Youth Action Group (Wellington)	35

A rights-based approach

Refugee-background young people have the same rights as other young New Zealanders. The visions and commitments set out for young people by the New Zealand government and its departments, and by certain New Zealand laws, articulate much of what this document is concerned with. Refugee-background youth have some unique barriers to their full participation in New Zealand life, and we ask that this document is read with a view that they have the same rights as other youth, but need some support to assert those rights or access services which ensure those rights.

Note on case studies

The case studies we have used to illustrate the issues are based on refugee-background young people we have worked with and anecdotal evidence, but not on any specific, identifiable young person. The case studies have been provided as examples of how the issues may play out in a refugee-background young person's life.

More Info

*Marieke Jasperse, ChangeMakers
Refugee Forum: 04 801 5812*

Introduction

This backgrounder is a starting point. The Refugee Youth Action Group (Wellington) is made up of government and non-government agencies keen to see action on the issues so refugee-background youth can reach their full potential. They will be advocating for other organisations and stakeholders to also support refugee-background youth to overcome some of the unique challenges they face.

There is a lot of valuable research that has been done with refugee-background youth in the last five years, and some very positive initiatives, but in terms of 'The Big Picture', very little has been done to provide better, systemic and coordinated support for refugee-background youth in many aspects of their lives.

Who are refugee-background youth (RB youth)?

In this backgrounder, we are referring to young people aged between 12 and 29. Although in New Zealand the official age bracket for young people is 14 to 24, and many youth service providers take a wider view and support 10 to 25 year olds, we include 12 to 29-year-olds because this is more in line with the cultural norms of refugee communities.

To us a refugee-background young person is someone who has come to New Zealand through the refugee quota system, through family reunification, as an asylum seeker, and sometimes as a migrant who has come from a refugee-like situation (for example, Zimbabweans, some Iraqis and Assyrians). It may refer to young people who have been here since they were very young, or have arrived in the last six months.

There is no statistical data on former refugees in New Zealand. When they are accepted as refugees in New Zealand they become permanent residents, and although some refugee-focused service providers and Department of Labour keep some data, there are no comprehensive statistics.

New Zealand accepts a 'quota' of refugees per year; 750 per year since 1999. According to Department of Labour, between 1999 and 2008, New Zealand accepted 7,843 refugees. Of those, 60 percent were under 24 when they arrived. This figure does not include refugees who are accepted under the refugee family support category (300 places allocated per year); and those who arrived between 1981 and 1999, who may have arrived when they were toddlers and now fit into that 'youth' category.

Over the last 15 years, Wellington has taken refugees from the following countries: Afghanistan, Burma/Myanmar, Colombia, Eritrea, Ethiopia (including Oromo), Iraq (including Assyrians), Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, Vietnam and Zimbabwe. Wellington is one of six cities in which refugees are resettled.

For more information about the refugee experience, go to <http://refugeeyouthwellington.wikispaces.com/>.

How we identified the issues

There have been a number of great reports and valuable forums which have been produced or run over the last five years, many of which have been participatory. We have summarised the issues from those reports (*see the back of this document for a full list of sources*). Not all refugee-background youth face every one of the issues; but all usually face a complex combination of the issues, and have unique barriers which make them hard to address.

RYAG intends to take this document over the next year and workshop it with refugee-background youth and with stakeholders to identify the 'actions' they want – on a big picture level – on these issues.

Issue

ACCESS TO YOUTH SERVICES

What is the issue for refugee-background youth?

There are a number of existing services available to youth, but only a small number of refugee-background youth are accessing them. RB youth often experience a different combination of any number of issues, which means the best possible support they can get is from a youth worker or a youth support service that can walk along side them to manage the issues over a number of months or even years. This would also help them to access some of the other services and programmes which would support their development.

What are the unique barriers for refugee-background youth?

While many of the services are youth-friendly, RB youth don't necessarily engage for a number of reasons:

- They may not know about the services – RB youth have less access to computers and internet, and are less connected with other people who may tell them about the service
- They may not trust the services to be confidential and be worried about what others will think of them, which while typical for other Kiwi youth, is exacerbated by cultural perceptions for RB youth
- Youth workers in the service are not confident with inter-cultural communication; there are very few RB youth or peer support workers. Often due to limited resourcing, there is little community outreach in refugee communities.

How are their needs currently being met?

A small number of RB youth are using the services, which usually happens because they're either a. in crisis and have been referred by other services, or b. a friend refers them.

Evolve Youth Service has a few RB youth peer support workers, which makes it more comfortable for other RB youth; and Vibe Youth Health Service have been seeking capacity-building for their youth workers on working with RB youth. CART, a Newtown-based youth service, has a few RB young men involved with their services; and youth services Challenge 2000 and BGI have had short-term programmes especially for RB youth in the past.

Case Study

Aisha, 17, is struggling with life a bit. She has been given responsibility for looking after her three little brothers because her Mum is working nights at the supermarket.

Her Mum is stressed out because her Dad is still in Kenya and they don't know how long it will be before he can join them in New Zealand. Aisha and her Mum have been working through the process and Aisha is sometimes expected to be the interpreter because her Mum doesn't speak English well, which she finds stressful especially because she is worried for her Dad too and sometimes doesn't know if she's getting the words right.

Aisha has been fighting with her Mum when she is around, because although she knows her Mum needs help she feels like her Mum isn't recognising the pressure she has on her.

Aisha is in her last year at school and it feels like she has to work twice as hard as her friends to get through the credits. She wants to go to university but is worried she won't get in.

She has just started a relationship with a guy from school; he is Kiwi and has different expectations of their relationship.

Aisha knows there is a youth service she can go to about the sex and relationship stuff but doesn't want anyone to know.

Potential Partners and Advocates

- Evolve Youth Service
- Vibe Youth Service
- Youth Transition Service
- Ministry of Youth Development
- DHBs and Regional Public Health
- CYF Social Workers in Schools
- BGI (Boys' and Girls' Institute)
- Challenge 2000
- CART (Consultancy Advocacy Research Trust) youth service
- Strengthening Families (BGI-supported)
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Peer support workers
- Youth workers
- Refugee-background youth and their families

Issue

CULTURE AND IDENTITY

What is the issue for refugee-background youth?

RB youth experience difficulties with cultural identity and belonging as they are a part of, and between, two cultures.

What are the unique barriers for refugee-background youth?

Although shaping identities is an issue for all NZ youth, RB youth have the extra struggle of sitting between two cultures. For some RB youth (usually those who arrived when they are a little older) the issue is feeling disconnected from their home culture, as well as feeling alienated from New Zealand culture; and for younger ones it's usually reconciling the two cultures they feel a part of.

Retaining ones culture and negotiating multiple, often competing identities is a key issue for RB youth and has a significant influence on their mental health and well-being. It is also a difficult concept for many youth to articulate and is often overshadowed by more immediate needs (such as education and employment demands). It does however have the potential to turn from an 'issue' to a great strength, offering a sense of groundedness and an opportunity for expression.

Faith is also a key component of culture and identity, and can offer a degree of belonging and certainty for young people.

How are their needs currently being met?

Some refugee-background communities have cultural groups that RB youth can be a part of, for example the Sudanese Acholi Cultural Group which practises traditional dance and music together, or the Afghan Women's and Porirua Burmese Women's Sewing Groups, which provide a space for women to come together and make crafts.

There was a 'cultural ambassadors' programme run by Somali Council several years ago but it hasn't been picked up since.

Potential Partners and Advocates

- Families and communities
- Office of Ethnic Affairs
- Multicultural Services Centre
- Other community centres
- Refugee Services Aotearoa New Zealand
- Local schools

Case Study

Haji, 17, from Eritrea is well-respected by his community. He's involved with their youth group, and often takes responsibility for organising things. He goes to a nice school because he lives near it, but he's one of the only Africans there. He has some friends, but none of them seem to understand about where he's come from and why, and they sometimes say mean things to him – sometimes on purpose, sometimes just because they don't know. He's proud of his culture and his country, but sometimes finds it easier to play it down at school and with his Kiwi friends, and act more Kiwi. His Mum once overheard him talking with friends and then accused him of being embarrassed of his culture. He tried to tell her he was just trying to fit in but she didn't see his perspective.

- Wellington Somali Council
- Wellington, Hutt and Upper Hutt City Councils

Issue

EDUCATION: Secondary School

What is the issue for refugee-background youth?

There are a number of interrelated issues within secondary schools for RB youth. Some schools in the region are managing these issues very well, but others are not supporting them at all. Anecdotally, we know many leave school without adequate qualifications and some drop out of school early.

What are the unique barriers for refugee-background youth?

Language – many RB youth have difficulty with English language – particularly written language skills – when they enter the school system and throughout their schooling; these language problems are intensified for students who have spent an extended period in refugee camps. There is little bilingual support, except in schools which have large numbers of RB students and are able to pool the students' funding for greater impact.

Schools and teachers lack resources - lack of training for teachers in effective means of communicating, interacting with, and integrating RB students. An exacerbating issue is that the groups of RB youth with high needs are at different places at different times. As their housing is dictated by availability at the time, a school may become 'expert' at managing RB youth, and then two years later have no RB students; and conversely, a school may go from having none to 50 in a few years time. There is currently no sharing of good practice knowledge between secondary schools.

Lack of understanding – many teachers and principals lack knowledge of the refugee and resettlement experience, or of the impact that trauma can have on learning and social engagement.

Lack of knowledge of support systems – RB youth are often only given ESOL support (and sometimes inadequate ESOL support) and are not aware of other special support that is available to them through schools, E.G. RTLBs, Individual Education Programme (IEP), special needs units and reading recovery units, extra funding from Ministry of Education.

Age placement – parents and community leaders are particularly concerned about the inadequacy of the placement of refugee students in New Zealand schools according to age when their learning needs may be much greater than that of their peers.

Discrimination, racism and exclusion in schools – RB youth often face inappropriate and ill-informed questions and negative assumptions about their origin and culture i.e. physical aptitude, learning ability,

Case Study

Abdi is 15, and arrived in New Zealand eight months ago with his mother and his three younger brothers.

As he has been in a series of different refugee camps over the last four years, he has been unable to pick up much English and his learning has been sporadic.

His mother is eager for him to succeed and wants to give him the best possible chance, so she enrolls him at a well-respected and somewhat wealthy school.

There are only a few other refugee-background students at the school, and so there is no special support for them.

Despite not being able to write and read in English, Abdi is expected to perform at the same level as his peers, and is only given three hours of ESOL support a week because the school says there's no funding for more.

Abdi performs poorly, and starts to withdraw socially. He is also being bullied at school as he looks different to most other students. He feels unable to talk to anyone about it.

His mother believes Abdi just needs to try harder, and is unable to talk with the school because of her own lack of English skills.

Abdi's family's social worker suggests Abdi switch to a school which better supports refugee-background students but Abdi's mother refuses because they are not 'good' schools.

trustworthiness and financial security. Some students report they feel they are treated differently and unfairly by teachers. There are often no peer support systems for the new students.

Future education plans – among some there is a notable gap between the aspirations of RB youth and their ability to achieve them; and among others a lack of motivation and aspiration, often linked to a lack of role models. RB youth don't often access – when it's available – career planning advice, and guidance or career counsellors don't have knowledge of specific issues for RB youth (E.G. trauma, literacy, family or financial pressure). Specialist services which have sound knowledge of refugee-background communities, such as ESOL Access and Assessment Service, are rare.

Economic issues – families experience difficulty paying the costs associated with their children's education. Extra-curricular activities are also out of their reach for this reason. It also means there are limited resources for them to use at home, e.g. computers and books.

Lack of family support at home – due to a lack of understanding of the school systems and a lack of communication between schools and parents, there is sometimes less involvement from parents in their children's education. Parents also may have a limited education background, and have different cultural concepts of learning and achievement.

Little monitoring or research - there is little substantial research on the educational needs of refugee-background youth. While it is well-documented that there is a wide gap between the educational achievement of Pakeha young people and that of Maori and Pacific young people, there is no such research on RB youth. Anecdotal evidence suggests they are performing at similar levels to Maori and Pacific youth.

How are their needs currently being met?

Within schools – some schools, usually schools which have substantial RB youth numbers, are supporting their RB students well, with responsive ESOL support and sometimes cross-cultural workers. RTLBs are picking up some RB students with high needs, and concerned teachers and counselors are doing their best with limited resources.

Homework support – Wellington Somali Council runs a Homework Centre in Wellington city for RB students which about 40 to 60 students use regularly. They are a bit short on tutors. There is a second homework support service at Wellington High School, run by a different Somali community group. It is also open to all refugee-background students but it mostly attended by Somali young people. There is no homework support especially for refugee-background students in Porirua or the Hutt. Specialist homework support is more effective with RB students as they have high ESOL and literacy needs, and other requirements which need some flexibility.

Ministry of Education – MOE have a Refugee Coordinator who assists schools to support their RB students, and there is some ESOL funding, and a flexible funding pool for schools with large numbers of RB students. Unfortunately, many schools are unaware that they can get extra support, and some schools are not even aware of RB students' backgrounds.

Case Study

"I sometimes feel no one really understands me. Like I will wake up and find it is all a dream. Sometimes in class I spend the whole day worrying about my mum who is working two jobs, one in a supermarket and as a cleaner at night. I have no computer at home so I never get to finish my assignments in time, I worry about my English, and I don't know who I can talk to without getting judged. I am keeping to myself a lot these days. Other students think I am being rude. But they don't know what I am going through."

Training for teachers – there has been two trainings run in the past few years with some secondary school teachers, which informs them about the refugee experience. These have been delivered by the AUT Centre for Refugee Education. There is a great need for teachers to share good practice info about working with students in the classroom though. Wellington Refugees As Survivors Trust have also delivered training to schools, and are available for advice and consultation on RB students.

Research – there has been several research reports completed by Victoria University of Wellington’s Participatory Research students, led by Sara Kindon. These reports have provided valuable insight into refugee-background youth’s educational needs at both secondary and tertiary level, but are done with relatively small numbers of youth. Cognition Education and the Ministry of Education are due to complete a longitudinal study into the experiences of refugee-background youth at secondary schools in Auckland and Hamilton at the end of 2011.

What services or support are available that could be utilised?

Ministry of Education/Refugee Handbook for Schools – an existing Ministry of Education handbook provides good advice on how to support refugee-background youth to settle into a school; it includes info about what resources schools and teachers can access. This handbook is unfortunately only distributed to ESOL teachers and even then only to new teachers or upon request. This handbook has great potential to form the basis of a training open to all, and even teacher trainees, working with refugee-background youth. Ministry of Education could also be more pro-active in informing schools of the support available for refugee-background youth.

Hutt Valley Learning Centre for refugee-background youth and families – there is currently no homework support specific to the needs of RB youth in the Hutt Valley. There is currently a project in development, spearheaded by ChangeMakers Refugee Forum, to establish a trust which would run a Hutt Valley Learning Centre for young people and families. However, the Learning Centre currently has no funding or support and it is not a certainty unless someone backs it.

Schools and teachers – positive school environments and supportive teachers have proven to be the difference between a RB young person succeeding and failing. However, only a few schools in Wellington are providing the support they need. There is potential for training to be developed for schools and teachers to help them build supportive environments for RB youth. There is a primary school teachers’ network in Wellington which shares good practice in working with refugee-background youth, and this model could be extended to secondary schools.

Parents – there is potential for more training and information to be given to parents about their children’s secondary school life. There is currently a set of resources on early childhood education, and some on primary, provided in different languages. This has not been extended to secondary school yet.

Potential Partners and Advocates

- Ministry of Education
- Schools who have worked hard to support refugee-background youth
- Primary school teachers network in Wellington
- Parents
- RB young people who have succeeded at school to be role models – e.g. Martine Udehemuka (academia); Terefe Ejigu (athletics and development studies); Daniel Gebreezgiher (football and computing)

- Hutt Valley Learning Centre/ChangeMakers Refugee Forum
- Wellington Homework Centre/Somali Council
- Wellington High School homework centre

Issue

EDUCATION: Tertiary Study

What is the issue?

RB youth often need some extra support to come up to the same level as their peers and to have the best chance of success at university. This means university preparation courses, English language courses – particularly for their written English language skills – and then academic support once they reach under-graduate level.

Why is it an issue for refugee-background youth?

- Most RB youth are working with English as a second language, and even if they have had some years of secondary schooling their work may not yet be up to the standard required for under-grad.
- They tend not to have any role models or people to seek advice from throughout university as many are the first in their family to attend.
- University staff members, particularly course advisors, are not trained to work with RB students and are not aware of the unique issues which may influence the study path the student takes.
- In the experience of agencies working with former refugees, RB youth are less likely to go on to well-paying jobs when they complete university. They often have a big role in contributing financially to the family, both in New Zealand and through remittances overseas.

What are the unique barriers for refugee-background youth?

Language and education – many RB students are unlikely to succeed at under-graduate level if they don't complete university preparation and English language courses first.

Course costs – because money is often a worry for them, they are reluctant to borrow more under the student loan scheme than they have to, so if the preparation and language courses are not free, they will go straight into under-graduate, ill-prepared and likely to fail. New prerequisites for student loans and allowances mean if they fail once, they lose their eligibility for the following year.

Numbers of places available – if RB youth do apply for the university preparation and English language courses, they are now competing for a smaller number of places for domestic students, as the government has

Case Study

Ibrahim was born in a rural part of Africa, and didn't go to school until his family moved to a refugee camp when he was 12.

He never learned to read and write in his mother tongue, so when he started school at the camp he struggled with English literacy. He was able to pick up spoken English fast though.

When he came to New Zealand at 15, he went to high school, which had good support for RB students and he managed to get through NCEA Level 1. He stayed at school until he was 19, but still didn't get NCEA Level 2.

At 20, he decides he wants to study political science at university. He can now enter as an adult student, so he enrolls, and talks to a course advisor who, after discussing his interests, suggests a double-major in political science and media studies.

Ibrahim takes out a student loan for the fees and organises a student allowance.

Although he enjoys the university environment and listening to the lectures, he struggles with the research and essays and in his first semester fails two out of three of his papers.

He feels disappointed with himself, so gives up and decides to leave university.

Two years later, he decides he wants to give it another go, as he has been working with a literacy provider to get his written English up to standard.

He applies for a student allowance again, but as he failed the last time, he is not eligible. He is reluctant to borrow for course costs, so he decides against university again and goes back on the benefit.

capped the funding allocated to each university or technical institute. In addition, from 2011, there are new enrolment policies for school leavers and mature students (over 20) that have greater requirements to get into foundation and mainstream programmes. International students who don't receive any government funding may be able to enroll in programmes when they are closed to domestic students.

Appropriate advice – RB students need good advice from people who know the unique challenges they'll face in their education. Their aspirations are often similar to that of other Kiwi students, but their path to get there is likely different.

How are their needs currently being met?

There is currently a **Refugee Study Grants** scheme funded by Tertiary Education Commission, which allows RB students to complete university preparation and language courses at no cost. This scheme is being disestablished from the end of 2010.

ESOL Access and Assessment Service - provides written and oral English language assessments and career pathway advice. The staff members are experts at dealing with refugee-background communities and are often the difference between a student taking baby steps to success or plunging headlong into failure. This kind of specialist service is vital to a RB young person's success.

Global Remix is a peer support group for RB students at Victoria University of Wellington, which provides some academic and social support. It's supported by a group of VUW staff passionate about RB students succeeding at university.

Potential Partners and Advocates

- Massey University
- Victoria University of Wellington
- Global Remix
- VUW Network to Support Refugee-Background Students
- Tertiary Education Commission
- ESOL Access and Assessment Service
- MClASS
- Young people have succeeded in tertiary education, particularly those who have succeeded through access to Refugee Study Grants

Issue

EMPLOYMENT

What is the issue?

In the experience of agencies working with former refugees, RB youth, whether they are finishing secondary school, or have arrived after secondary school age, have long periods of unemployment.

Why is it an issue for refugee-background youth?

Unemployment is an issue for many young people, but RB youth face some extra challenges around education, qualifications, language, work experience and accessing appropriate services.

What are the unique barriers for refugee-background youth?

Education – although some RB youth get to New Zealand in time to get some years at secondary school, they often leave without qualifications. This is often to do with their previous educational background, their written English language skills, lack of resources and support at school, lack of parental support, and the other major life issues they're coping with.

Language – especially for those who arrive after high school age, their written English language skills may not be up to the standard expected by an employer.

Employment support services – are often not designed for refugee-background communities. Although there are some programmes which address the needs of migrants and refugees specifically (such as MClasS) they are only open to those aged 18 or above and are not designed for working with youth generally.

Careers advice – in the experience of agencies working with former refugees, RB youth are far less likely to access careers advice available to them either at school or through Career Services. It is likely a combination of the lack of knowledge of the services and a lack of savvy about the importance of planning from early on.

Case Study

"We spend so many years in school, only to come out and find nobody wants to employ us. Why go to school in the first place? If you go to uni, get a loan, how do you repay it without a job? If I had a trade or something, maybe it would be easy to be employed."

Case Study

"Though I am so desperate for a job, I cannot work in a place where they sell alcohol, and where people gamble. It is against my religion and culture. Now they say I do not want a job. I cannot explain to them since they do not know much about my culture." – Muslim young person

How are their needs currently being met?

Support within schools - Although a few schools do very well, the majority of schools provide little extra support for their refugee-background students, and resourcing for it is also inadequate. Poor performance at schools means poor employment prospects.

ESOL Access and Assessment Service – Provides appropriate and relevant advice for RB students on their transitions between school and work or further study.

Youth Transition Services – there are three providers in Wellington, but they are not often accessed by refugee-background youth. See 'Access to Youth Services' for more.

Modern Apprenticeships (Tertiary Education Commission) – are available for 16 to 21 year olds but are currently not being accessed by RB youth. There are apprentice guides available in several Pacific languages, but not in languages spoken by refugee-background youth.

Career Services – support is available, and through a pro-active approach to community engagement they are providing more relevant and flexible services. However, the service is still under-utilised by refugee-background youth.

Potential Partners and Advocates

- Work and Income
- Youth Transition Services – The Learning Shop, Partners Porirua, Vibe
- ChangeMakers Refugee Forum/Employment
- Career Services
- Modern Apprenticeships/TEC
- Careers Advisors and Guidance Counsellors at secondary schools
- MClasS Job Brokers
- Mayor’s Taskforce for Jobs
- Earthlink Inc.
- Wellington Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Workbridge

Case Study

Isse, 24, worked for an NGO in his home country before conflict forced him to leave. He has skills in volunteer coordination and administration, and has a good understanding of the NGO environment. He has good spoken English but his written English is basic. When he was living in a camp across the border, he was used as an interpreter by UN staff. He has been in New Zealand for a year now, and has done two English courses. He feels confident and ready for work. He applies for several jobs he believes he is able to do well but doesn’t get an interview for any of them. He visits a job broker, who tells him he’s having a hard time because he doesn’t have any ‘Kiwi experience’. She suggests he takes an elder care job.

Issue

FAMILY

What is the issue?

RB youth face challenges and conflict with their parents and family, which while normal for many young people, is exacerbated by some unique factors.

Why is it an issue for refugee-background youth?

Family is key to any young person's development, and RB families face great challenges in their first five years in New Zealand, particularly as often they have only some members of their family here or may have lost others.

What are the unique barriers for refugee-background youth?

Young refugees face the challenge of reconciling their parents' and their communities' strong cultural expectations with 'kiwi' culture. E.G. some parents see the family is of highest importance and the needs of the individual are secondary and young people are taking on a more western idea of independence.

Parents are coping with a number of complex issues themselves, such as mental health and trauma issues, housing and employment, cultural transition etc. which leaves them with less capacity to support their children.

There is sometimes a lack of support from parents for young people in education (sometimes to do with language or lack of knowledge of systems), and extra-curricular activities such as sport.

Parents often rely on young people as the 'go-between' when it comes to language and host community.

Families are often 'incomplete' when they come to New Zealand. They may have lost family members in conflict or during their journeys; or they may have come ahead of some family members. Separation from close family members – particularly if they are still at risk – can cause great distress for the whole family, including young people.

Family reunification, the process of bringing family members to New Zealand, can be a very long, stressful and complicated process for families. It places great strain on the family, both financially and emotionally.

How are their needs currently being met?

- Some social work support available for the first year of resettlement through Refugee Services Aotearoa New Zealand
- Wellington Refugee as Survivors Trust sometimes works with families as a whole; and if working with a young person will include their family in the process.
- Wellington Community Law Centre and Refugee Family Reunification Trust, and other refugee-focused organisations offer some support for family reunification processes. There is an advocacy paper outlining the impact of this issue available from ChangeMakers Refugee Forum.

- Building Strong Families project (CRF) explored issues of family conflict and generated a resource which can be delivered as a workshop (in progress)
- Strengthening Families is a service for young people which tries to create a coordinated response to a young person and their family's needs – we are unsure about the level at which it is being utilised by RB youth

Potential Partners and Advocates

- Strengthening Families (MSD initiative, supported by BGI in Wellington)
- Wellington Refugees As Survivors Trust
- ChangeMakers Refugee Forum
- Skylight
- Child Youth and Family
- Family and Community Services
- Youth Health Services – Vibe and Evolve
- Youth workers
- Relationships Services
- Wesley Community Action
- Refugee Services Aotearoa New Zealand
- SEPCHO

Issue

GANGS AND YOUTH CRIME

What is the issue?

Police and community leaders report a growing number of RB young men have been committing petty crime, working with gangs, and more recently, establishing their own gangs (an Assyrian Kings chapter). The issue is particularly around Newtown and the Eastern suburbs of Wellington city, though RB young men in other parts of the region have also been seen by Police and courts.

Why is it an issue for refugee-background youth?

Although the issue is not occurring on the same scale as it is with other ethnic groups in New Zealand, it has the potential to grow exponentially. Underlying issues such as unemployment, literacy, language, education, alcohol and drug issues, family life and uncertain culture and identities are big for RB young men, and they are not being targeted in responses to the issues.

There is a lack of positive male role models in refugee communities, often because fathers and brothers are missing or have been killed. This means young men who are working with gangs are the role models for their little brothers and cousins.

What are the unique barriers for refugee-background youth?

RB young men are at particular risk of heading down the path of gangs and youth crime because of all the under-lying issues outlined in this document and above.

Steps to overcome these issues and get them back on a more positive path can be more difficult, for example, they may not have been able to find work because of lack of English language literacy; or they may have arrived in New Zealand alone and be looking for belonging and safety.

Some community leaders have reported young men's attitudes towards the justice system as cavalier – compared to some of their home countries justice systems they think New Zealand's is soft. Some young men are also unaware of the transition from the youth justice system to the adult system, and the more serious consequences once they're 17.

Case Study

Abdul is 19, and arrived in New Zealand two years ago. He came on his own as all his family was killed when he was just 12. His neighbours took care of him at the camp he was at, but they were resettled in the US when he was 16. He coped on his own okay, but was relieved to get to New Zealand.

He found it very lonely when he got here, and since being here has only been able to find bits of work here and there. He's can't read or write, though his spoken English is getting there. As he has a lot of time to fill, with few friends and little work, he drinks quite a bit.

A couple of months ago, he got caught drink-driving. He got six months probation and 200 hours community service. Waiting to meet his probation officer one day, he meets another guy, who is chatty and friendly. They strike up a friendship, and Abdul visits him at his home, where he lives with his family. They are all very welcoming.

Soon his new friend offers him some work, and lets him know he can make a lot of money fast, and assures him there is little risk involved. He says several members of his family have done similar jobs for him, and only once has it ended in jail time. Despite some reservations, Abdul agrees to it, completes the job without getting caught, and is paid well for it. His new friend introduces him to other friends, who all belong to same gang, and he starts working for them on a regular basis. He feels safe in his new group of friends, and with the money he is making able to create a better life for himself.

How are their needs currently being met?

- NZ Police, particularly Youth Aid and community constables, are monitoring the issue and working with individuals and their families where possible.
- CYF Youth Justice is working with those aged 10 to 16, including Family Group Conferences
- ChangeMakers Refugee Forum currently has a youth worker employed, with funding from the Community Response Fund, to pilot programmes for RB young offenders in Newtown. His funding finishes in March 2011.
- CART youth service are working with some RB youth as they're referred, usually by local Police

Potential Partners and Advocates

- Ministry of Social Development (Youth Gangs project)
- Ministry of Youth Development
- CYF Youth Justice
- Youth Services – CART, Evolve, Zeal, Vibe
- ChangeMakers Refugee Forum/youth worker
- Community leaders
- NZ Police
- Work and Income
- Youth Court
- Probation Services

Issue

HEALTH

What is the issue?

As well as having many of the same health issues as other young New Zealanders, some RB youth also have serious mental health and trauma issues; and are reluctant or unable to access youth and mental health services.

Why is it an issue for refugee-background youth?

RB youth are far less likely to access health services for a number of reasons – they don't have info about them, lack of confidence (which impacts everything from catching a bus to the service to speaking English well), and are not sure if it will stay confidential.

The 'refugee experience' means RB youth arrive in New Zealand with some trauma and experience of upheaval, and as their parents or caregivers are often in the same situation, there is little support at home for the issues.

As they are often living in inadequate housing, they are also at greater risk of preventable health problems – e.g. asthma, allergies.

In the experience of some agencies working with former refugees, alcohol and substance abuse is an increasing problem for RB youth. Some services however won't manage alcohol and substance abuse problems at the same time as mental health problems.

What are the unique barriers for refugee-background youth?

RB youth often don't access youth health services because they either don't know about them, or don't feel comfortable that their issues will stay confidential. Sometimes – as is the case for other youth – they just feel embarrassed. For some communities it is also unusual to talk to a stranger about your problems.

Refugee mental health is a specialist area and there is currently only one provider in Wellington – Wellington Refugees As Survivors Trust - to help RB youth in this area. There is a waiting list for the service.

There are also some cultural barriers, as in some communities there are very different understandings of good mental health, treatment, and stigmas around mental health.

Case Study

Mohammad, 24, has been in New Zealand for four years. His whole teenage life was spent moving from camp to camp, and although he was with his Mum their relationship was fraught. His brother was killed before they left their home country, and his mother told him that she wished it had been him. When he first got here he lived with his Mum, but their relationship became more and more stressed and Mohammad decided to move out. He now lives next door to a group of men in their 20s who are connected with gangs. He starts socialising with them, drinking heavily and smoking weed too. He is unemployed, so has all day to sit and think. He is very depressed and sometimes starts drinking before lunch just to stop himself from thinking. His Mum's counsellor is aware of his drinking problems, and has given him the number of an alcohol counselling service but he doesn't want to go.

How are their needs currently being met?

Wellington Refugee As Survivors Trust works with young people to address mental health and trauma issues, though there is a waiting list for the service.

Evolve and VIBE youth health services are available, but not currently being accessed by RB youth in any great number.

In 2010 there was a pilot training delivered by Wellington Refugee As Survivors Trust (developed by Waitemata DHB and RAS NZ) called CALD – Culturally and Linguistically Diverse - which is aimed at building cultural competencies for those working in the health and mental health fields with refugee-background clients.

There are occasional youth development projects which go some way in addressing RB young people's health and well-being, such as Wellington Refugees As Survivors Trust creative writing workshops, and ChangeMakers Refugee Forum's youth media project.

Potential Partners and Advocates

- Newtown Union Health Services
- Wellington People's Centre
- Pomare Union Health Centre
- Ministry of Health
- Regional Public Health, particularly nurses in schools
- Wellink
- Youthline
- Skylight
- SEPCHO
- Community development staff at ChangeMakers Refugee Forum, Refugee Services Aotearoa New Zealand and Wellington Refugees As Survivors Trust.
- DHB funded service -
 - Child, Adolescent and Family Services – Youth Specialty Service (Lower Hutt)
 - Mental Health and Addiction Services - Hutt Valley DHB
 - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service – Wellington and Porirua
 - Wellington Refugees As Survivors Trust

Issue

HOUSING

What is the issue?

Housing is a major issue for refugee-background families which has significant impacts on young people. There are three different issues: over-crowding or inadequacy of housing assigned; availability of housing for young people ready to go out on their own but unable to afford private rentals; and lack of emergency accommodation for young people.

**We'd like to note that we're aware that both Housing New Zealand and city council housing face considerable pressure on their limited resources; and that there are issues for many of their tenants. Social housing in New Zealand is in crisis, with shortages across the country. We've included this issue primarily for the sake of raising awareness of the fact that young people's lives are impacted by the issue.*

Why is it an issue for refugee-background youth?

All quota refugees are assigned Housing NZ or Wellington City Council housing when they arrive. The average stay for a refugee-background family is longer than that of other families. They sometimes also take up private rentals, which can be subsidized through Work and Income. Many young people perceive their houses and neighbourhoods as over-crowded, unsafe, unclean and isolated from amenities and transport. This has significant impacts on young people's well-being. For former refugees who have suffered trauma, unsafe housing can 're-traumatise' them, which significantly impacts on the healing and resettlement process.

What are the unique barriers for refugee-background youth?

RB families, in their first year of resettlement, are some of the poorest families in New Zealand. They have few belongings; have no cash, no assets and often no employment prospects. With this as a starting point, it is incredibly hard for families to get out of public housing into private rentals.

Young people who are ready to go out on their own – often because it's too crowded with their family – have great difficulty securing public housing. We have heard of one example of a young person being on a waiting list for over two years, and of being pressured into moving into private rentals.

As they are also facing a number of other issues – unemployment, mental health and trauma issues, family issues (including being separated from family still in their home countries) – it is more difficult for RB youth to make this transition into their own places.

In crisis situations, when young people require emergency accommodation, there are very few options other than night shelters, which can be unsafe places, especially for young people.

Case Study

Razul, 16, has been living in Wellington for two years. His family – his Mum, three sisters and two brothers, and grandfather – live in a three bedroom state house in Strathmore. He shares a bedroom with his grandfather and two brothers, which means that he never has any private space, and it's really hard to get his homework done because there's never a quiet room. The house is really cold, so the whole family has been getting a lot of colds and two of his sisters have developed asthma. He attended a school in the city, and it takes him an hour to get to school because he has to catch two buses (which only come every 30 minutes). There's a dairy across the road but other than that no shops. It can be a bit of a rough area, and he often feels intimidated by some of the other young people who live near by, who yell things out to him when he walks by.

How are their needs currently being met?

Housing New Zealand provides state housing and prioritise quota refugees when they first arrive, but much of the housing is inadequate and unsafe. There is a lengthy waiting list if families want to shift houses.

Wellington City Council provides public housing for refugees as well, though again there is a waiting list. Some of the housing complexes are currently under-going upgrades – which is positive – but means there is less housing available in Wellington.

Refugee Services Aotearoa New Zealand (RSANZ) supports quota refugees in their first six months to one year in Wellington, including finding housing for them. Unfortunately though, if anything goes wrong after that period, RB families have little support. Sometimes RSANZ volunteers continue the relationship with families, but they are not necessarily able to manage housing and advocacy. RASNZ are currently looking into community-based social housing initiatives.

Wellington Refugees As Survivors counsellor advocates often support their clients through housing issues because many of their mental health issues cannot be addressed until their housing concerns are addressed.

Where refugee-background tenants feel they have been treated unfairly, there is a State Housing Appeals Authority available to assess their case.

Potential Partners and Advocates

- Housing New Zealand
- Wellington City Council housing and community development teams
- Habitat for Humanity
- Refugee Services Aotearoa New Zealand
- Wellington Housing Trust
- Hope Centre – Salvation Army

ID/DOCUMENTATION

What is the issue?

RB young people are often prevented from signing up for a benefit, getting an 18+ card, learners licence, opening a bank account, accessing public housing etc. because they don't have adequate ID.

Why is it an issue for refugee-background youth?

RB young people do not often have access to a birth certificate or any other ID from home. When they arrive they get a 'Refugee Identity Card' which is valid for two years. They cannot become a New Zealand citizen and apply for a passport until they have been here for five years.

It may seem like a minor bureaucratic issue but it stops RB young people from achieving 'normal' milestones that other Kiwi youth achieve.

What are the unique barriers for refugee-background youth?

- Because of their circumstances in which they arrive in New Zealand, it is almost impossible for them to obtain any ID from their home countries.
- The Refugee Identity Cards only last two years, and because in the first two years of arrival RB families often move houses they sometimes get lost.
- Most of the processes which require ID have no room for exemptions for anyone that doesn't have at least one form of ID.
- RB youth birth date details are often recorded incorrectly, sometimes because they don't come from a culture that records it in a formal way, sometimes because they are only able to supply a year of birth and then assigned 1/1 as their birth date. Mix-ups and miscommunication about birth dates have led on occasion to RB youth being accused of dishonesty.

How are their needs currently being met?

A RB youth would usually wait until they are eligible and could afford the fees for a passport before they were able to move on to any other processes. There are no exemption policies.

Potential Partners and Advocates

- Department of Labour /Immigration New Zealand
- HANZ – 18+ cards
- Justices of the Peace
- Refugee Services Aotearoa New Zealand
- Wellington Community Law Centre

Issue

LANGUAGE

What is the issue?

There are several issues related to language:

- RB young people's learning is often very sporadic before they come to New Zealand; their spoken English language skills are often the best of the family, but it indicates nothing about their written English skills. They usually have a lot of work to do to come up to the same level as their peers in this area.
- Other young people may not have ever had the opportunity to learn English, so come here with neither written nor oral English language skills.
- There is limited ESOL support in schools, and the support is less than effective for pre-literate young people.
- There are some existing support services for them, but funding is currently at risk or has been cut.
- As well as English, some parents feel it's important to retain their mother tongue, which adds a feeling of pressure to RB youth.

Why is it an issue for refugee-background youth?

Young people cannot get through their basic education and into further study or employment if their written and oral English language skills are not up to scratch.

It's also a barrier for making friends and navigating a new community, which builds their strengths and resiliency in a new country.

What are the unique barriers for refugee-background youth?

If RB young people are put into secondary school, their language and literacy needs are often greater than ESOL support is able to provide. Although there is some funding 'attached' to refugee-background students for ESOL, it is often inadequate to provide the support needed. There is sometimes a lack of understanding of their needs as well.

If they are over 18, they are put into adult classes, such as those provided by MClASS. Although they are run by ESOL specialists, and are especially for refugees, they're sometimes not the right learning environment for young adults.

How are their needs currently being met?

Within secondary schools: There is some Ministry of Education ESOL support attached to each refugee-background student, but it is often inadequate to meet the needs of the young person. RTLBs are sometimes accessed for refugee-background students but not often.

RTLBs: This specialist service can be accessed by schools, and they are available to do bi-lingual assessments to assess an RB young person's learning needs in their own language, so they know if the issue is language needs or other learning needs. Sometimes schools assume it is a language issue when it may be a developmental or learning need and may not refer a RB young person to an RTLB. Bi-lingual assessments need to be requested by schools and then approved by the region's Ministry of Education Refugee Coordinator and the local RTLB cluster.

At tertiary level: There are currently grants available for refugee-background students to sit preparation classes before starting under-grad, which teaches them some more advancing English language writing skills. The grants will be disestablished at the end of 2010.

Other adult English support: There are several English language providers – E.G. MClasS, English Language Partners, as well as community education classes at Wellington High. Since adult community education funding was cut there are no community education English language classes in the Hutt. As mentioned, these are not the best learning environments for young people.

Mother tongue classes: There are some mother tongue classes being organised by some motivated communities. A positive example of this is the Afghan community, who secured funding from Wellington City Council to run mother tongue and cultural classes for Afghan young people. The Eritrean community is currently running classes on volunteer's time.

Potential Partners and Advocates

- ESOL Access and Assessment Service
- English Language Partners
- MClasS
- ESOL teachers within schools
- Community members interested or with skills in English and home languages
- RTLBs
- Adult Community Education providers
- Literacy providers
- Wellington City, Hutt City and Upper Hutt City Councils
- Libraries and community centres

Issue

SAFETY AND SECURITY

What is the issue?

Some RB youth feel discriminated against by Police, often coming up against ill-informed officers who have stereotypical attitudes toward them. It is particularly an issue for African youth.

Why is it an issue for refugee-background youth?

In general, there is not a positive relationship between Police and RB youth. There is a lack of understanding on both sides – RB youth often mistrust Police and their perceptions are often influenced by corruption in their home countries; Police don't necessarily have any knowledge of RB communities, and lack some cultural awareness and understanding.

What are the unique barriers for refugee-background youth?

- RB families' previous experience with Police or authorities in their home countries is often negative.
- RB youth, particularly those that come to New Zealand post-primary school, don't have any positive exposure to NZ Police early on in their life.
- RB youth don't have any knowledge of their legal rights and responsibilities when they get here.
- RB youth are more likely to try to manage a situation with Police on their own rather than call parents or caregivers (who often would understand even less).

How are their needs currently being met?

There have been a couple of projects aimed at building a positive relationship between refugee youth and Police, driven from Wellington Somali Council and Evolve Youth Service. This was around 2008 when it was a pressing issue for African youth in particular.

Somali Council have delivered some inter-cultural training at NZ Police College; and in 2008 Evolve, Somali Council and a group of refugee-background young men worked together to get the group to their restricted licence. There is some inter-cultural awareness training which has been developed by Office of Ethnic Affairs.

Youth Law and community law centres provide youth-friendly advice and some services for young people.

Potential Partners and Advocates

- NZ Police, particularly ethnic liaison officers
- Office of Ethnic Affairs
- Wellington Community Law Centre and Youth Law
- Friends of the Court

Case Study

After the mother of a young Somali man visits Police with a plea to stop her boy from getting into more trouble, Police call a meeting. They call Somali community leaders together to discuss a group of young men who have been involved in petty crime in Wellington, including the son of the mother. They identify the young men for the community leaders, who realise that only 4 of the 10 identified are from the Somali community. The other young men are from Eritrean and Ethiopian communities. Some of the young men have been claiming to be Somali when they are not. The Police want community leaders to rein in the young men in before they get into more trouble. The community constable in the area has visited a few of the families, but not got very far, mostly because of language difficulties and perceptions of Police. A few of the young men have had court appearances, and always turn up by themselves.

- Community leaders
- ChangeMakers Refugee Forum/Youth worker

Issue

SPORT AND RECREATION

What is the issue?

RB youth, particularly young men, are eager to be a part of sports teams but are not doing so at the level they should be; and some young RB women are keen for girls-only sports activities which are harder to find.

Why is it an issue for refugee-background youth?

There is great potential for refugee-background young people in sport to achieve their goals, be better connected with other young people and the community, and to stay healthy. Recreation provides an opportunity for them to connect with their peers, and is great for their emotional well-being. Anecdotally we know, refugee-background young people don't participate in sport and recreation activities to the same level as other young people.

What are the unique barriers for refugee-background youth?

Connectedness to the community: RB young people often don't know how to go about joining a sports team or go along to a social group or event for young people, or lack the confidence to do so. They are less likely to have friends in sports teams to help them make the connection.

Money: RB families low incomes mean money is a major barrier for young people interested in sports, or even for relatively cheap social activities. Tournament and uniform fees are often too much. The fundraising culture that exists in New Zealand is new to many RB communities and many do not yet have the skills and know-how to fundraise.

Lack of access to community spaces: Some communities establish their own sports teams or social groups, but have difficulty securing community spaces to practice/meet in.

Muslim young women: for many Muslim young women, mixed gender activities are not ideal. There are not as many opportunities for girl-only activities.

How are their needs currently being met?

Some young people join school sports team; though if RB young people arrive after secondary school age it is much harder to get into sports.

There are some community spaces available, but many young people don't know they're there or how to access them.

Case Study

Fatima is 20 and has been living in New Zealand for two years. She is Muslim, and enjoys going to mosque on Fridays because she gets to spend time with other girls. Sometimes she visits them at their house, but it's often very crowded. The rest of the time she prefers to stay in the house. She did an English course when she first arrived, so her language skills are okay but she is extremely shy, and not sure if her English will be good enough to make Kiwi friends. She likes sewing and making things, reading magazines, and spending time with her cousins and friends at Mosque or at their houses. One of her cousins has mentioned trying to start a group for girls, but doesn't know where they will be able to meet and how they will get money to do what they want to do.

There are some girl-only activities organized – for example, women only swim nights at Upper Hutt and Kilbirnie pools.

There are two ‘multi-ethnic’ football tournaments a year which encourage refugee communities to get involved.

Potential Partners and Advocates

- Wellington City Council, Hutt City Council and Upper Hutt City Council community recreation teams
- Young people who have ‘made it’ in sport - Daniel Gebreezgiher, Terefe Ejigu, African young men of Naenae Football Club
- Community coaches and their teams
- Sport Wellington
- SportZone
- NZ Institute of Sport
- Rongotai College Football Academy

Issue

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

What is the issue?

RB youth want more social activities, and need more peer support. It's particularly important for some aged 18 to 29 who may not enter school or work for a number of years and end up quite isolated.

Why is it an issue for refugee-background youth?

Peer support and social activities are a protective factor for any young person; and RB youth need more support than most, particularly in their first two to five years of resettlement.

What are the unique barriers for refugee-background youth?

- Some RB youth are not comfortable sharing activities with the opposite sex
- Some RB youth want activities which would not be usual for other young Kiwis – for example, sewing groups.
- Some RB young people are not as motivated or supported to initiate activities in their peer group
- Most RB youth families are low-income, and often don't have spare money to pay for sports teams fees or uniforms
- There are cultural activities which some RB youth would like to participate in, which needs to come from within their own communities

How are their needs currently being met?

Refugee Services Aotearoa New Zealand provides volunteers for quota refugee families for the first six months to one year of resettlement. RB youth see them as a good potential source of peer support, though they are often focused on the adults in the family, and often don't continue the relationship after six months.

There are some communities that organise cultural activities, and it's often young people who are looked to lead the activities. However, this usually happens with community development support from organisations, e.g. ChangeMakers Refugee Forum.

The Multicultural Services Centre is used by communities with prior arrangement and with the support of a staff member.

Potential Partners and Advocates

- Refugee Services Aotearoa New Zealand / Community Development
- Multicultural Services Centre
- Zeal and Secret Level
- Refugee community and youth groups

Issue

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

What is the issue?

RB youth are not accessing existing youth development opportunities for young Kiwis; and some youth development programmes are not flexible enough or appropriate for RB youth.

Why is it an issue for refugee-background youth?

RB youth, as one of the more vulnerable groups of young people in New Zealand, stand to benefit hugely from existing youth development programmes. With the support of experienced practitioners, and as part of a group of positive young people, RB youth have a better chance of reaching their potential.

What are the unique barriers for refugee-background youth?

RB youth don't access information and services in the same way as other young New Zealanders. Many do not have computer access at home; and generally they are not as engaged with adults, schools and the wider community so are less likely to hear about the opportunities by word-of-mouth.

Some RB youth have particular needs that have to be met before they will join a youth development programme. For example, some Muslim youth are not comfortable working with the opposite sex; some RB youth's parents are not comfortable with their children working with strangers; some RB youth may not know how to navigate public transport systems to get themselves there. Most RB families – particularly for those who have been here for less than five years – are very low income, so even a return bus fare can be a barrier.

In any youth development programme there is a certain level of outreach from the organisers. Many programmes are not engaging with RB communities and young people because a. they don't know where to start; and b. other groups of vulnerable youth are a higher priority.

How are their needs currently being met?

There are a number of great youth development programmes available, and RB youth very occasionally access them, but there needs to be better outreach and engagement from both the programme organisers and the communities. For some programmes there needs to be some work done to ensure the services are appropriate for RB youth.

Potential Partners or Advocates

Case Study

Thirteen-year-old Yasin is living in a council flat with his Mum and his four brothers and sisters. His Mum is very depressed and most days won't get out of bed until evening; leaving Yasin and his siblings to sort themselves out. Yasin's older sister makes sure they all get to school and then goes to her job. It's his sister's income that makes sure they get groceries each week. Yasin has a couple of friends at school, who he met at his primary school. It's very different from his primary school and he's not sure he likes the change. He's not involved in any sports (other than P.E.), but likes basketball and plays on the weekend with some of the older kids at his housing complex. He's really into hip hop and one day wants to be an MC. He's keen to make some more Kiwi friends, but doesn't know where to start. His family is not connected with any services other than Work and Income at the moment.

- Challenge 2000
- BGI
- YWCA
- Zeal
- Yes 2 Youth
- Nga Ara Kete

SOURCES (in date order)

'Methods of Good Practice for Teachers to Use in Supporting Refugee-Background High School Students' - CRF research report, 2010

Laura Barrett, ChangeMakers Refugee Forum, 2010

'Refugee Family Reunification in Wellington' – Discussion document, July 2009

A discussion document prepared by ChangeMakers Refugee Forum, Refugee Family Reunification Trust, Wellington Refugees As Survivors and Wellington Community Law Centre

'Steps to Success: Exploring educational support for Somali secondary school students in Wellington' – VUW research report, 2009

Burford, J. Clark, S. Hammonds, J. and Morton, K. with A. Sofo, A. Sofo, A. Bulle, F. Farah, I. Mohamud, L. Cade, U. Amiin and S. Kindon

'Quota Refugees in New Zealand: Approvals and Movements (1999–2008)' – Department of Labour research report, 2009

Asif Quazi, Senior Research Analyst, International Migration, Settlement and Employment Dynamics (IMSED) Research; Department of Labour

'Learning to See Differently: Supporting refugee-background students at Victoria University' – VUW research report, 2008

Cowie, C. Evans, M. Vink, T. with members of Global Remix and S. Kindon

'Mapping Refugee Youth Services, Wellington' - Ministry of Youth Development policy document, 2008

'Young People, Our Future' – discussion notes from Regional Refugee Resettlement Forum, April 2008

ChangeMakers Refugee Forum/Department of Labour

'Life in New Zealand' – short documentary, 2009

ChangeMakers Refugee Forum, Yunited Voicez youth media project, <http://yunitedvoicez.tumblr.com/>

'Moving to Nu Zild' - short documentary, 2009

ChangeMakers Refugee Forum, youth advisors project, www.youtube.com/youngchangemakers

'Immigrant Community Soccer Groups' – Meeting notes, July 2006

MSD; Sport Wellington; Capital Soccer; Hutt, Upper Hutt, Porirua and Wellington City Councils; ChangeMakers Refugee Forum; Office of Ethnic Affairs; members of the Assyrian, Ethiopian, Somali, Iraqi, Oromo, South African, Sudanese, and Zimbabwean communities.

'Supporting refugee-background students to achieve their goals' – VUW Research Report, 2006

Horner, C., S. Kahn, K. Paton, with A. Hagos and S. Kindon Victoria University of Wellington *Supporting Refugee-Background Students to Achieve their Goals*, Research Report, SGEES, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, 2006, 100pp.

'Refugee Young People and Resettlement' – info sheet, Centre for Multicultural Youth, 2006

'Homework Club: Strengthening Refugee Achievement' – VUW research report, 2005

Gong, X., G. Saulbrey, S. Sen and C. Souness

'Assyrian Youth' – VUW research report, 2005

Armstrong, L., A. Leathers, P. Collie, H. Koshin, F. Blakey and M. Markland, with P. Pithyou and E. Eshow

'African Youth Health and Well-Being' – VUW research report, 2005

King, M., N. Newman, K. Satterthwaite, E. Thompson, J. Wenham, with Y. Gebre, A. Osman, and M. Osman

Refugee Youth Action Group (RYAG Wellington)

June 2010

Who We Are:

A group of government and non-government organisations who advocate for refugee-background youth needs to be recognised and addressed.

Participating Agencies:

- ChangeMakers Refugee Forum
- Wellington Refugees as Survivors
- Refugee Services (Wellington)
- Wellington Somali Council
- VUW Network to Support Refugee-Background Students
- Regional Public Health
- Wellington City Council
- Office of Ethnic Affairs
- Ministry of Youth Development (Central South Region)

Our Vision:

Refugee-background youth (12 to 29) who live in Wellington are happy, healthy and have the tools and support they need to reach their potential. This means:

- They are included
- They are participating
- They have a voice
- They are empowered
- They have access to the services and support they need

How We Can Reach This Vision:

- Stay focussed on The Big Picture
- Initiate dialogue between refugee-background youth and agencies
- Highlight the unique needs of refugee-background youth to decision-makers, policy-makers and service providers
- Ensure refugee-background youth have access to and are engaging with existing youth services
- Connect organisations who can work together to improve outcomes for refugee-background youth where gaps exist

Key Tasks (2010/2011):

- Set a youth participation strategy for the group
- Set a 'sustainability' plan for the group – as people come and go from different agencies, how will we maintain momentum and organisational buy-in?
- Write a background document which gives a very clear picture of the current needs and issues of refugee-background youth in Wellington
- Work with refugee-background youth to determine what actions they want from agencies to meet those needs
- Take the backgrounders and the actions refugee-background young people want to agencies, organisations and service providers that can make an impact
- Bring together organisations within different areas and refugee-background youth to talk about how they are able to improve outcomes for refugee-background youth