SHARED UNDERSTANDINGS OF PRACTICE: PROGRAMS

Map programs and initiatives currently operating that are designed to assist and support the mental health of people from a refugee and asylum seekers background.

This document has been developed by CatholicCare as part of the G21 Refugee and Asylum Seeker Mental Health Partnership Shared Action Plan for 2017. The partnership involves key agencies from across the G21 Region including:
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**Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (VFST, Foundation House)**


VFST delivers specialist interventions, based on a holistic trauma recovery model, which are delivered in a manner consistent with the National Mental Health Standards. VFST’s client services are directed at achieving and promoting recovery through a range of interventions which are both trauma-focused and trauma-informed. Interventions are tailored to meet individual client needs and preferences, recognise the family and community context, and take account of protective and risk factors. Interventions are life-stage appropriate, are tailored to reflect the developmental needs of children and adolescents, and aim to strengthen family cohesion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aims</th>
<th>Program Activities</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deliver high quality specialist psychiatric and psychological services to survivors of torture and other traumatic events</td>
<td><strong>Mental Health Clinic</strong>&lt;br&gt;The Clinic brings together independent practitioners with specialist experience in torture and trauma, and sometimes further specialisations such as adolescent health, to provide psychopharmacology and psychotherapy services to Foundation House clients. Clients of the clinic can be connected, as appropriate, to counselling, advocacy, natural therapies, medical referral, community capacity building or other programs, providing a unique, holistic and flexible model of service. Often the needs of other family members are identified in the course of providing treatment and these family members may be linked into the Clinic or to other Foundation House services. <a href="http://www.foundationhouse.org.au/mental-health-clinic/">http://www.foundationhouse.org.au/mental-health-clinic/</a></td>
<td>Foundation House has a family-centered approach to working with children. The program currently operates in four primary and two secondary schools across Melbourne.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promote access and inclusion for school children, adolescents and families impacted by refugee trauma.</td>
<td><strong>Children, Adolescents and Families</strong>&lt;br&gt;Counsellors whose area of expertise is working with children, adolescents and families impacted by refugee trauma, are located within direct service teams. With an early intervention approach, the program is located within school settings in order to maximise access and inclusion. The program brings together specialised counselling and advocacy support, with systemic work, in partnership with schools and educators. <a href="http://www.foundationhouse.org.au/children-adolescents-families/">http://www.foundationhouse.org.au/children-adolescents-families/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilitate and support the social inclusion of recently arrived young people of refugee background, aged 16-25.</td>
<td><strong>Ucan2</strong>&lt;br&gt;The program fosters cooperation between providers of education, social support, training and employment services to provide refugee background young people with:&lt;br&gt;• access to, and engagement in education, training and employment</td>
<td>In 2014-15 Ucan2 Engaged with 286 students and hosted four school holiday programs. Of the students who were surveyed, a majority revealed:</td>
</tr>
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### SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF PRACTICE: REFUGEE & ASYLUM SEEKER MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM RESEARCH PROJECT

| **Provide a safe, supportive place for young Afghan men who might otherwise be in danger of becoming disengaged and isolated.** | **The Afghan Young Men’s Group project**
A flexible, ‘semi-structured’ group where participants are encouraged, but not required to attend. Facilitating much needed relationship building, psycho education, and mentoring. The group also provides the grounds to start processing some of the traumatic experiences the young people have been through; and the ongoing stressors of being uncertain when – or if – they might be reunited with their families, who continue to live in dangerous circumstances. The group work model provides social support and information, and assists the young men recognize their abilities and skills in areas such as sport and art, and supports independent living skills. It helps make connections between members, and with Foundation House workers, and together the participants build positive memories and experiences.

|---|---|

| **Improve the capacity of people from diverse cultural backgrounds to promote wellbeing within their communities** | **Community liaison work**
VFST employs community liaison workers with the relevant cultural background to work alongside their communities through a range of strategies including group work, psycho-educative sessions, leadership development, engaging with young people, and encouraging community participation in various regional networks. Recent target communities have been Karen, Chin, Assyrian/Chaldean, Afghan, Sierra Leonean, Liberian, Bhutanese and Iranian. | This model has been used effectively in the areas of family support, early years, education, child and adolescent mental health and community based research in maternity services. |
|**Improve the capability of service systems and client communities to promote the wellbeing of survivors** | **Community advisors**
Community advisors are identified by community leaders and others, and invited to participate in a community advisory group with service providers. The community advisors receive orientation and skills development in advocacy (as required) by VFST facilitators. | Philanthropic funding was used to build school capacity to respond to the needs of refugee background students and their parents/carers. This led to investment by the Victorian Government in a program that is now known as the Refugee Education Support Program (RESP). |
|**Improve the capability of schools to promote the wellbeing of students from refugee background and their parents.** | **Education**
The Schools Support Program offers a specialist service to teachers and school leaders in schools with refugee-background students. It provides a tailored program including school audits, action plans, provision of resources, professional development and strategies to support parent engagement. | |
# NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS) – New South Wales


STARTTS aims to develop and implement ways to facilitate the healing process of survivors of torture and refugee trauma and to assist and resource individuals and organisations who work with them to provide appropriate, effective and culturally sensitive services. The individual refugee does not exist in a vacuum, but within the context of their family, social network, refugee community and the larger Australian society. Trauma has impacts across all of these spheres; given this, STARTTS has a holistic and systemic approach addressing all five areas.

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<td>Reduce the symptoms of refugee trauma such as anxiety, hyper vigilance and sleep difficulties.</td>
<td><strong>Neurofeedback</strong>&lt;br&gt;Neurofeedback works by helping the brain re-learn how to produce brainwave patterns that help it to function effectively.&lt;br&gt;A specially designed computer game is used to help participants produce brainwaves in the ‘normal’ range.&lt;br&gt;Participants are attached to the computer by a non-invasive electrode placed on their head. They are then helped to enter a state of deep relaxation.&lt;br&gt;Supported by a trained counsellor, participants learn how to ‘operate’ the computer game by producing brainwaves at particular frequencies. Brainwaves at frequencies outside the ‘normal’ range produce no positive result in the game.&lt;br&gt;After regular sessions practicing with the computer, participants eventually learn how to produce these brainwaves unassisted.&lt;br&gt;In the next stage, participants begin to address their conscious and unconscious memories of torture and trauma in a safe and controlled way. In becoming aware of these memories, and in learning to produce a different response in the brain to those memories, they start to regain control of their lives. <a href="http://www.startts.org.au/services/clinical-services/neurofeedback/">http://www.startts.org.au/services/clinical-services/neurofeedback/</a>.</td>
<td>STARTTS' own results indicate that the program is making a positive difference in the lives of refugee children and adults. While sample sizes are still small, STARTTS data shows improvement in more than 85% of participants. These positive results have been confirmed by feedback STARTTS has received from parents, teachers, counsellors and others. Literature review drew no definitive conclusions regarding the clinical effectiveness and safety of biofeedback on PTSD and depression <a href="https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK253825/">https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK253825/</a>.</td>
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<td>Promote access and inclusion for school children, adolescents and families impacted by refugee trauma.&lt;br&gt;Build capacity of school community to support students from Refugee backgrounds.</td>
<td><strong>The STARTTS Schools Program</strong>&lt;br&gt;- provides clinical assessment and counselling interventions on school grounds&lt;br&gt;- supports student welfare staff with trauma-recovery information, professional development, training &amp; advice&lt;br&gt;- facilitates therapeutic groups in mainstream primary and secondary schools and in Intensive English Centre’s&lt;br&gt;- provides input at regular meetings with the Department of Education and with the Catholic Education Office&lt;br&gt;- produces Hints for Healing, a free electronic magazine that is distributed via the education systems to all school counsellors in NSW and beyond. Topics covered include building resilience; the impact of refugee trauma; self-care issues; and the needs of refugees as young carers. <a href="http://www.startts.org.au/services/children-and-young-people/schools-program/">http://www.startts.org.au/services/children-and-young-people/schools-program/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Description</td>
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| Assist children and young people to overcome the psychological impacts of trauma | **Clinical services for children and young people**  
School and other outreach location based Counselling and psychotherapy for children and young people (also provided at STARTTS offices). These interventions utilise different approaches including play therapy, sand tray, music and art therapy, and are provided to a range of age groups from infants to adolescents and includes work with parents.  
| Assist children and young people to overcome the psychological impacts of trauma. | **Jungle tracks**  
A storytelling approach suitable for a broad range of ages from early primary and possibly younger to older high school students in individual and group therapy. The characters in the Jungle tracks book series encounter many of the events and issues that refugee children and young people face including grief and loss, depression, emotional outbursts, low self-esteem, sleep difficulties and fear and anxiety. These, together with the themes of hope and empowerment, are addressed in the stories. Jungle Tracks kits are available for sale to other service providers. |
| Address Psychological and social impacts of refugee trauma for refugee men who have survived multiple traumas, including torture, sexual violence and rape. | **MANTRA**  
Mantra was developed as a forum where participants share their experiences, explore issues and reflect on pathways to healing  
Mantra assists men to better manage the effects of the horrors of the past by supporting and assisting them to:  
- Share and validate difficult experiences  
- Explore strategies to restore emotional wellbeing and mental health  
- Work through issues such as shame, guilt, and identity confusion  
- Help strengthen support networks to facilitate ongoing recovery  
Participants may also discuss issues that are related to their worries about their appeal for protection and uncontrollable fears about the safety of family overseas. Participants able to approach counsellors for advice and assistance in an informal manner in a group environment.  
| Assist relaxation, physical relief and healing. | **Complementary Therapies**  
- Nutrition and lifestyle guidance  
- Physiotherapy |
### Address the social and psychological impacts of trauma on people from refugee and Asylum Seeker background.

**English Classes**  
Volunteer run English classes for people (mostly women) from refugee and Asylum Seeker background. Recognising the traumatic backgrounds of many participants, STARTTS also offers a psychoeducational activity to the group every term, run by a counsellor. It may be yoga, meditation, or counselling. Every month an outing is planned, and every quarter they have a celebration for a special cultural or religious occasion.  

### Promote local economic growth in Western and South Western Sydney by providing support to local entrepreneurs with refugee and refugee-like backgrounds wishing to start or expand a small business enterprise.

**Enterprise Facilitation**  
It is a model of development that supports the creation of wealth from within a community by nurturing the resourcefulness of its people.

### Address Psychological and Social impacts of trauma in Highschool students from refugee backgrounds between the ages of 14-18

**Sporting Linx**  
Refugee students are trained weekly in their chosen sport by professional and elite sports coaches from various sporting associations. In addition they are provided with psychoeducation about the refugee experience, and encouraged to discuss relevant issues such as bullying and racism, fostering respect for themselves, sports psychology and achieving goals. In partnership with AFL Multicultural program, the Western Sydney Wanderers Football Club and Cricket NSW.  
The program has worked with refugee youth from Afghanistan, Burma, Iraq, Palestine, Somalia and Sri Lanka.

### Teach participants to make choices that will improve their lifestyles and lead to healthier living.

**In shape program**  
The In Shape program is a health promotion program. In Shape was designed to be used by bilingual health educators, and is available in 8 languages: English, Arabic, Assyrian, Italian, Spanish, Karen, Khmer and Vietnamese. The program is run over the course of 14 weeks. Each program ideally has a maximum of 20 participants.  

### Other Complementary Therapies

- Orthobionomy
- Soft tissue massage
- Acupuncture
- Aromatherapy
- Traditional Chinese medicine  
**Address social and psychological impacts of trauma.**

**Drumbeat**

The ‘Drumbeat’ program is an evidence-based therapeutic intervention based on experiential learning as participants engage in a cooperative process, making music together and developing social interactions and connections.

The program is offered over 10 weeks and teaches drum rhythms within a group environment. The program has many other benefits such as releasing inner tension; externalising feelings and emotions; allowing creative self-expression; reducing anxiety and stress and increasing social skills and self-awareness.

The final session is a public performance which requires participants to plan and collaborate so that team work and communication skills are also valuable program outcomes.

Drumbeat is relevant to all age groups and is of benefit to people who might not benefit from more cognitive based interventions to address refugee trauma issues.


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**Foster long-lasting relationships built on common interests, friendship, cooperation, mutual understanding and trust.**

**Youth Camps**

STARTTS camps for young people are residential camps that run for three nights, and are held during every school holiday period.

The indoor and outdoor program is specifically designed to:

- Develop social skills
- Encourage teamwork
- Enhance self-esteem and confidence
- Promote positive relationships with other individual youth and camp leaders
- Engage participants in a wide range of positive recreational and educational activities
- Develop young people’s sense of responsibility

The Residential program Aims to:

- promote the development of positive relationships and encourage young people to ‘slow down’ and reflect on their lives without the distractions of modern life; provide structure, routine, consistency and predictability for young people;
- focus on young people’s strengths and positive behaviour;
- Include participation in activities that reconnect young people with their culture, promote healthy lifestyles and facilitate skill/knowledge development; and teach young people new ways to express their needs and cope with their emotions and life experiences.

Melaleuca Refugee Centre – Northern Territory

http://www.melaleuca.org.au/

Melaleuca Refugee Centre provides early settlement support services, counselling services and facilitates significant community development programs in the areas of cultural transition, strengthening families and peace leadership. We offer a uniquely integrated approach by hosting a range of services and programs under the same roof.

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<td>Foster Social connections;</td>
<td><strong>The Families in Cultural Transition (FICT)</strong></td>
<td>In 2013-14 14 people from Rohingya, Hazara, Kurdish, Persian, Congolese, Burundi, Ugandan and Burmese communities completed FICT facilitator training, resulting in 10 community facilitators running FICT workshops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide comfort and support to refugees;</td>
<td>A nine week series of workshops designed to help newly arrived refugees learn about Australia and settle successfully in their new country. As well as finding out about Australian culture and systems, participants can talk about how their torture and trauma experiences may affect them and their families. They also learn about organisations that can help. Role plays, discussion, brainstorming, interviews, games, guest speakers and case studies are all used to stimulate thinking, explore emotions and help learning. <a href="http://www.melaleuca.org.au/referral-services/community-development/living-australia-families-cultural-transition-fict/">http://www.melaleuca.org.au/referral-services/community-development/living-australia-families-cultural-transition-fict/</a></td>
<td>46 Rohingya, Hazara, South-Sudanese and Congolese participants attended 4 FICT programs. (Melaleuca 2014, P.21)</td>
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<td>Increase individual and community capacity.</td>
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| Provide information and support for parents and families from refugee background | **Tips & Ideas on Parenting Skills Program (TIPS)**                                | In 2013-14:  
  - 3 TIPS community-specific programs were delivered to newly settled communities.  
  - Collaboration with MCNT and Relationships Australia enabled delivery of TIPS program to mixed-community groups.  
  - 6 community facilitators provided TIPS workshops, with topics selected by participants according to community priorities. |
Alternatives to Violence Program (Pilot Project)

Peace Leadership Training

The AVP workshops:
- support respectful relationships
- assist people to respond to conflict in non-violent ways
- are delivered by community members
- are based on experiential learning
- build an understanding about the causes of conflict
- create space to learn peaceful responses to conflict

Through interactive exercises, games and role play participants gain skills through sequential workshops: Basic; Advanced; Facilitator Training.

Facilitators from the community are supported to grow their awareness of the impact of conflict on their behaviour, use new strategies and build skills to deliver to a group.

The newly trained community facilitators co-deliver workshops to their own as well as other communities with the support of a senior, experienced facilitator.

Many people of refugee background have had a profound experience of violence and the consequences of it. They may have trained in the past in the areas of gender violence, conflict resolution and mediation.


The model has been continually developed since 1975 and delivered to thousands of people in over 50 countries (www.avpinternational.org).

The Melaleuca program has lead the way in terms of delivering AVP to people of refugee background in Australia, and workshops have subsequently been delivered in Perth, Sydney and Brisbane.
## NATIONAL

**Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC)**

[https://www.asrc.org.au/](https://www.asrc.org.au/)

ASRC aims to provide demonstrably high impact programs and services that are driven by the needs of people seeking asylum. They aim to empower people who are seeking asylum to maximise their physical, mental & social well-being by ensuring every person receives information, advice and access to psycho-social and wellbeing support.

<table>
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| Provide demonstrably high impact programs and services that are driven by the needs of people seeking asylum. Empower people who are seeking asylum to maximise their physical, mental & social well-being by ensuring every person receives information, advice and access to psycho-social and wellbeing support. | **General Access Program (GAP)**
GAP is the ASRC's first point of contact for people requiring support in relation to a wide range of welfare issues including homelessness, family violence, social isolation and destitution. The program works to advocate and build relationships with external service providers to ensure best possible outcomes and access for people seeking asylum.
The program offers three services; needs assessment, information and external referrals for people requesting assistance by the ASRC; intake appointments, orientation and internal referrals for people assessed as eligible for ASRC membership. | In 2015–16, GAP assisted on average 45 new people each week and eight new membership intakes. |
| Support Asylum Seekers to alleviate distress, and especially those who have experienced trauma, torture, grief and loss. | **Counselling**
The program provides specialist pro bono counselling to ASRC members and in some cases non-members who are experiencing high levels of psychological distress. This holistic service involves flexible and responsive support as well as referrals for psychiatric assessment and treatment programs. Counselling offers short to long term, individual and couples therapeutic support to members as well as intensive support. ASRC’s Continuing Care team also offer intensive support to members who are highly vulnerable or experiencing crisis. The Counselling and Continuing Care teams comprise experienced psychologists, social workers, and counsellors. |

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**Note:**

This document provides an overview of the ASRC's programs and services. For more detailed information, please visit [https://www.asrc.org.au/](https://www.asrc.org.au/).
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<tr>
<th>Complementary Therapies</th>
<th>Foodbank</th>
<th>Food Justice Truck</th>
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<tr>
<td>The complementary therapies (CT) program is a unique service providing Foundation House clients with access to a range of natural therapies such as:</td>
<td>Foodbank is a free grocery store inside the ASRC Footscray Centre that provides fresh food to people seeking asylum each week. The foodbank provides:</td>
<td>The Food Justice Truck (FJT) is an award-winning, mobile fresh food market that enhances food security for people seeking asylum in the Victorian community by offering locally sourced produce, grains, legumes, tea and bread at a 75% discount to people seeking asylum. The Food Justice Truck also welcomes general public shoppers who pay local market rates.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Naturopathy</td>
<td>- essential items to make transition to a new life more comfortable</td>
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<td>- Herbal medicine</td>
<td>- food in a fair and dignified way that is healthy and culturally appropriate</td>
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<td>- Nutritional therapy</td>
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<td>- Remedial and therapeutic massage and yoga.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Physiotherapy and shiatsu therapy are also offered thanks to the generous contribution of qualified volunteers</td>
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<td>Complementary therapies practitioners work in collaboration with counsellors and the Mental Health Clinic.</td>
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In 2015–16, Material Aid supported 1600 members as well as hundreds of non-ASRC members requiring emergency support.

This included:
- groceries to over 600 people every week, many of whom are children;
- hot meals served five days a week to around 240 people (over 61,250 meals a year);
- 17,682 nights of shelter to 96 people, of whom 24 were children. (ASRC 2016, P.21)
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Support young people seeking asylum under the age of 30 to increase their participation and engagement with the broader community</th>
<th><strong>Youth Empowerment</strong></th>
<th>The program has established a proactive, engaged group of young people who have made lasting friendships and gained confidence and leadership skills to thrive in Australia.</th>
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<td>This program supports young people seeking asylum under the age of 30 to increase their participation and engagement with the broader community through employment, education and opportunities to connect through social outings and recreation. In 2016, members designed a program in which they learnt about leadership, resume writing, public speaking, and the Australian workplace, such as employee rights, pay rates, taxes and workplace culture.</td>
<td>Some of the graduates of the program have now moved forward to successful jobs in their chosen fields, are leaders in their communities, inspirational speakers and also mentors for other young people who also share a lived experience of seeking asylum.</td>
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<td><strong><a href="https://www.asrc.org.au/empowerment/">https://www.asrc.org.au/empowerment/</a></strong></td>
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<td><strong>Women’s Empowerment</strong></td>
<td>WISE Women’s impact is significant, with women members now comprising 40 per cent of the Innovation Hub’s program participation rate. That equates to 229 women members joining the Hub since July 2015. On the professional development front, 135 women were enrolled in various professional courses, including beauty and hairdressing. Many women members are already accomplished professionals and an Australian qualification is an essential step to resuming their careers (ASRC 2016, P.24).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support women seeking asylum to realise their full potential through a range of professional development workshops and activities.</td>
<td>ASRC’s entrepreneurial female members can access the Women in Business program where they receive support to start up their own businesses. The program also runs a nine-week Sisterhood Journey, a self-growth program run in partnership with MIND Australia and another similar program called SHINE, in partnership with Hope inc. These programs provide a space for women to build their confidence and self-esteem, enabling them to discover who they are and the person they want to become. Activities include English language classes, education and training and other community-based activities to foster creativity and social engagement.</td>
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<td><strong><a href="https://www.asrc.org.au/empowerment/">https://www.asrc.org.au/empowerment/</a></strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Build partnerships with mentors in the Australian community to identify and break down barriers to employment and education, while also helping to build the confidence and professional skills of mentees.</td>
<td><strong>Professional mentoring</strong></td>
<td>In 2015–16, 23 members obtained work in their chosen professions in fields as diverse as geology, engineering, finance and community development. A further three members obtained industry internships. Eight enrolled in tertiary study, three were employed as tutors at Victoria University, and six employed as researchers at the University of Melbourne. (ASRC 016, p.24)</td>
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<td>Professionals seeking asylum with work rights are matched with their Australian professional counterpart and over 12 months, are supported to develop career plans, build up knowledge of the Australian workplace, expand local networks and knowledge of the sector, receive support to search for jobs as well as develop personal and professional goals.</td>
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<td><strong>Vocational mentoring</strong></td>
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<td>People seeking asylum who may not have professional qualifications or work rights can be matched with a mentor from a similar vocational background to develop long-term vocational goals and strategies to best access education, training and employment opportunities. The program responds and adapts to the different stages that members experience in their employment pathway. The transition-based model provides holistic and individualised opportunities for each member.</td>
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| Support people seeking asylum to build on existing skills, knowledge and networks to start their own business in Australia. | **Entrepreneurs Program**  
The program provides access to services and specialist workshops that enable participants to rapidly progress their ambitions and offers individual coaching, advice and business mentorship, networking meetups and co-working spaces.  
How the program works:  
Stage 1: connections  
This stage provides networking opportunities to build new relationships with other business owners and experts in the industry who can help the participant start their business. The program hosts regular networking events called Business Connect, where guests have the opportunity to make new business connections.  
Stage 2: pathways  
Participants reach this stage once they have a clear business idea in place. At this stage the participant will be connected with a business mentor, and have the opportunity to access education and training opportunities to be ready for the business launch.  
Stage 3: incubator  
This is an intensive four month program for people who have completed the Connections and Pathways stages and are ready to build, launch and grow their business with a dedicated business coach.  
[https://www.asrc.org.au/entrepreneursprogram/](https://www.asrc.org.au/entrepreneursprogram/) | In 2015–16, the program’s ‘incubator’ was instrumental in supporting the launch of six member-led businesses – a 50 per cent increase on the previous year.  
Eight volunteers and one staff member assisted 53 members with individual business coaching, facilitated a vital network for members with Melbourne’s business community, and invited industry experts to deliver workshops tailored specifically to members’ needs. |
| Help provide social and economic empowerment for people seeking asylum. | **Social Enterprise**  
**ASRC Catering**  
ASRC’s professional and dedicated catering team comprises ASRC asylum seeker members led by an experienced team of mentor chefs.  
**ASRC Cleaning**  
ASRC Cleaning is a social enterprise business that provides commercial and domestic cleaning services to the Melbourne region. All employees are members of the ASRC.  
ASRC Cleaning provides sustainable and reliable income for more than 17 ASRC members seeking asylum,  
All profits go back into the ASRC to support and empower more than 3000 people seeking asylum (ASRC 2016, P.33-4). |
Centre For Multicultural Youth (CMY)
http://www.cmy.net.au/

CMY use a combination of outreach, one-to-one specialist case management and group work to support and empower young people who are at risk to overcome issues, connect to community and settle well in Australia.

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<tr>
<td>Provide holistic support to newly arrived (in Australia for less than 5 years) young people from refugee background who are at risk of homelessness.</td>
<td><strong>Reconnect</strong>&lt;br&gt;The Newly Arrived Youth Services is a specialist Reconnect program, providing case management, counseling, group work, family mediation and practical support.&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://www.cmy.net.au/youth-support">http://www.cmy.net.au/youth-support</a></td>
<td>In 2014-15 the Reconnect Program provided one-to-one case work for 152 young people, and engaged clients in four group programs. Clients and their families reported:&lt;br&gt;- Increased engagement with school and other education facilities&lt;br&gt;- Better family relationships and improved support for families&lt;br&gt;- Increased awareness of the service system and options for support&lt;br&gt;- Increased knowledge of the housing system and improved access to housing&lt;br&gt;- Increased links to counselling or other therapeutic support&lt;br&gt;- A growing awareness of self, both mentally and physically, which has led to self-control, assertive communication and conflict management&lt;br&gt;- Increased access to sport &amp; recreation activities&lt;br&gt;- Better management of health issues and resolution of legal issues such as fines.</td>
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<td>Assist young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds to overcome barriers to training and employment.</td>
<td><strong>Pathways</strong>&lt;br&gt;The Pathways program supports young people through education options, experience of work, traineeships and apprenticeships in growth industries in Victoria; connecting them to invaluable networks and systems that will help solidify their work prospects for the future.&lt;br&gt;The program provides opportunities for participating young people to:</td>
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### SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF PRACTICE: REFUGEE & ASYLUM SEEKER MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM RESEARCH PROJECT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aims</th>
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<td>Facilitate opportunities for new arrivals to participate in</td>
<td><strong>Multicultural Retreats</strong></td>
<td>Over 154 AMES Australia clients attended the annual Men's and Women's Multicultural</td>
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#### Build social connections and empower young people who are newly arrived to Australia.

**Settle Smart**
Settle Smart is a leadership project that will train 12 young people as Peer Educators who will deliver basic information sessions to newly-arrived young people across Melbourne, to help them make decisions about their future.


#### Promote Social Inclusion

**I Speak Football**
The 'I Speak Football' program is a youth-led program that uses football to tackle social inclusion head on. Through running free football sessions across Victoria for young people from diverse backgrounds, the program aims to address and highlight racism and discrimination, access and equality, and participation. The project also provide skills and qualifications to 20 volunteer young leaders who receive accredited refereeing and coaching qualifications to run the sessions.

[http://www.cmy.net.au/i-speak-football](http://www.cmy.net.au/i-speak-football)

In 2014–15 the program recruited 20 Young Leaders (18-25 years) and engaged 66 local players (14-17 years) in weekly football sessions and information sessions.

- 100% of Young Leaders reported an increased understanding of other cultures
- 100% of Young Leaders reported an increase in their culturally diverse peer networks
- 100% of Young Leaders reported an increase in connections with their local communities

(CMY 2014, P.13)

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#### AMES (Adult Migrant English Programs)

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community life and form strong social bonds with their own cultural groups as well as the community at large.

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<th>Retreats provide safe, pressure free spaces for newly arrived men and women of all ages and nationalities to undertake skills based programs. Attendees at separate men’s and women’s retreats come together alongside AMES Australia volunteers to share two days of workshops and fun activities. Past activities have included Bollywood dancing, African drumming and women’s health sessions, art and craft classes, AFL workshops, a soccer tournament and listening to Indigenous Australian stories. Clients also develop an understanding of the settlement process and build skills needed to live in Australia.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retreats at Camp Manyung, Mt Eliza. The Women’s Retreat, in its 14th year, was held in November. The Men’s Retreat, in its ninth year.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Address some of the emotional and social issues faced by Asylum Seekers.</th>
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</table>
| **Meaningful Engagement Program**
Through this program our volunteers and stakeholders help our clients engage through a range of activities including sport and fitness, creative arts and cooking. The program gives clients valued roles in their community and a sense of purpose as they build their skills to potentially settle in Australia. |
| **Voices without borders**
The choir offered a great opportunity for AMES Australia clients to engage with the broader community, make new friends and have fun. For many, particularly for asylum seekers, this is one of few opportunities to meet and interact with other people. The choir continues to engage and provide an invaluable point of social connection and activity for clients of AMES Australia. |
| [https://www.ames.net.au/asylum-seeker-program/meaningful-engagement-program](https://www.ames.net.au/asylum-seeker-program/meaningful-engagement-program) |
The Refugee Council – United Kingdom  
[https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/](https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/)

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</table>
| Provide a gender and culturally sensitive therapeutic service to Refugee and Asylum seeking women who have experienced or witnessed domestic violence. The support is offered in the form of both one to one counselling and group work | **The Safer Refugee Women Project**  
**One to One Counselling**  
The Safer Refugee Women Project works within a Psycho-social Model where all aspects of the lives and challenges of vulnerable women refugees and asylum seekers are held in mind. We provide a safe and confidential space where women can explore the impact of the continuum of anxiety and stress brought about by their forced migration. Delivering Psycho-education as a tool, women are given useful information about the psychological reasons for their frightening symptoms, empowering them with grounding, breathing and mindfulness techniques to enable them to better manage flashbacks, nightmares and other symptoms arising from the extreme nature of their experiences. This understanding empowers them to feel more in control of the day to day challenges and to be able to better engage in Therapy.  

**Creative Focus**  
This is a group that provides a weekly space for vulnerable women who are feeling isolated and trapped in the role of asylum seeker and who yearn to be able to be involved in activities that better define who they are. Pattern cutting, sewing, crochet, knitting and beadwork are some of the activities in this group. By working together and supporting each other in their endeavours, women are able to make bonds in the group and share some of their day to day frustrations.  
[https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/what_we_do/therapeutic_casework/powerful_womens_project](https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/what_we_do/therapeutic_casework/powerful_womens_project) | |
narrative therapy model which allows a space for clients to reconnect in a supportive and enjoyable activity. Each week for eight weeks clients come together to tell stories and share experiences while drawing their own ‘Tree’ to represent all the people and things that have influenced and shaped their lives, both as they were and as they are now. In this way clients can choose to ‘re-author’ their particular stories, reclaiming their power and their sense of being in control of their lives.

**Rimba Therapeutic Men’s Group**

Rimba Therapeutic Men’s Group provides an opportunity for asylum seeking and refugee men to share their experiences in a confidential, safe, non-judgemental and respectful space.

[https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/what_we_do/therapeutic_casework/psycho-social_groups](https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/what_we_do/therapeutic_casework/psycho-social_groups)

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**MIND – United Kingdom**
London UK
[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

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<tr>
<th>Aims</th>
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| Build a better understanding of the mental health concerns of refugees and asylum seekers in England | **The Refugee and asylum seeker mental health advocacy project**
Drawing on 14 months’ research, Mind developed a four day Mental Health Advocacy Training Programme for advocates from Refugee Community Organisations. The course covered topics such as stigma, mental health disorders, the mental health system, working with mental health professionals and understanding the various roles within the system, mental health and drugs, understanding medication, mental health awareness event planning, the Mental Health Act, and self-care for advocates. The course was delivered to diverse group of advocates from refugee communities to prepare them for advocating in Mental Health settings. | Of the 150 RCOs that were engaged in the research component of the project, Mind only had the capacity to provide training for 30 advocates. Of those advocates, Mind acknowledge that few will have adequate support from a manager or a statutory agency to develop their work. This work will only be effective in the long-term if the role of the advocate is recognised by the statutory services with which they hope to engage, and if it is funded on a sustainable basis. |

## Determinants of Health

### Education

Education is important in building emotional resilience and affecting a range of later life outcomes that raise the risks of mental disorders – such as employment, income, and community participation. Schools are also important as institutions capable of delivering upstream, preventive programs to young people. (WHO 2015, P.22)

Programs that improve language acquisition, health, computer, cultural, media and scientific literacy are effective because the relationship between literacy, life opportunities, employment and mental health and wellbeing is proven to be strong. These programs target adults of all ages in a range of community based settings, particularly those people with low general primary or secondary education and non-English speaking new arrivals. Literacy programs are rarely evaluated in terms of mental health promotion but adult literacy programs do have an effect on self-concept, self-esteem and self-image (DHS, 2006, p. 73).

### Physical Health

“The relationship between physical and mental health indicates that poor physical health can cause mental disorders, and vice versa. Reducing inequalities in mental health cannot be achieved without reducing inequalities in physical health”. (WHO 2014, P40)

“Research has shown that exercise, particularly vigorous activity, can reduce anxiety, depression and negative mood, and improve self-esteem, sleep and cognitive functioning. Following this finding, physical activity has been used as an intervention to improve mental health” (Welsh et al 2015, P.17)

“Physical activity/exercise—has a positive effect on mental health outcomes for adults and children, but emotional benefits and feelings of wellbeing are likely from increased social interaction as solitary exercise does not improve depression” (DHS 2006, p.45)

### Social Support/Inclusion

“Social support and social relations give people emotional and practical resources as well as a sense of mutual respect where people feel loved and valued. All these aspects have a protective effect on health and provide a buffer against health problems. Without them people are likely to experience less well-being, more depression, and higher levels of disability from chronic diseases. At the societal level, social cohesion (the quality of social relationships and the existence of trust, mutual obligations and respect in communities) helps to protect people and their health. Societies that have high levels of income inequality tend to have less social cohesion and more violent crime” (AMA 2016)

“Community arts interventions have been shown to increase self-confidence or self-esteem, especially among those on the social margins and at risk for poor mental health, and have been shown to provide social support, build social capital and encourage urban renewal. Further research is needed on community arts initiatives, however, to make stronger generalised claims of efficacy” (Welsh et al 2015, P.23)

### Economic Resources & Participation

“Unemployment and poor quality employment are particularly strong risk factors for mental disorders and are a particularly significant cause of inequalities in mental disorders, as risk of unemployment and poor quality employment closely relates to social class and skill levels. A recent report from the Institute of Health Equity on health impacts of economic downturns, describes evidence suggesting close associations between job loss and symptoms (though not clinical diagnoses) of depression and anxiety79 80, and demonstrates that these impacts are particularly clear for the long-term unemployed. Strategies to reduce long-term unemployment will be particularly important in reducing risk of mental disorder in adults” (WHO 2014, p.24).

### Early life

“Family building and parenting influences children’s mental and physical health and a range of other outcomes throughout their lives; Good, accessible maternal services, information and advice about parenting strategies, and helping manage transitions to parenthood are protective of adult and child mental health” (WHO 2015, P.27)

“It is now well understood that the foundations of adult health are laid down before birth and in early childhood. Slow growth and poor early experience become biologically embedded during development. They increase the lifetime risk of poor emotional health and reduce physical cognitive and emotional functioning into adulthood.” (AMA 2016)
Reference List


Centre for Multicultural Youth, <http://www.cmy.net.au/>


Department of Mental Health and Substance Dependence, Prevention and promotion in mental health, World Health Organization, retrieved May 2017 <http://www.who.int/mental_health/media/en/545.pdf>


NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS) <http://www.startts.org.au/>


Literature review: “Clinicians and researchers have begun to shift the emphasis away from experiences of trauma and symptoms of post-traumatic stress toward understanding refugees’ experiences and challenges within the resettlement environment and toward fostering strength, capacity and resilience among individuals and communities (Papadopoulos, 2007). There is increased recognition of the need to take a holistic approach which acknowledges cultural differences, persons in context and the inherent strengths and wisdom within the refugee community. To this end, many advocate for the increased use of qualitative, emic approaches, building upon a rich history of medical anthropology and sociology to understand cultural differences in meaning and distress and to foster culture-specific methods of coping and responding to adversity (de Jong & Van Ommeren, 2009; Dossa, 2009; Gozdziak, 2004; Miller, 1999; von Peter, 2008). In turn, effective interventions can utilize culturally appropriate ways of engaging with refugees that do not pathologize but rather honor cultural systems and values to foster recovery and resilience processes” (Murray et.al 2010).

“Considerable emphasis has been given more recently to the need for interventions that rely less on medical models of psychological distress that unduly emphasize stress-related trauma and more on psychosocial models that promote positive personal change (Summerfield, 1999; Papadopoulos, 2007). Such interventions aim to “develop a sense of stability,
safety and trust, as well as to [assist clients to] regain a sense of control over their lives” (Ehntholt & Yule, 2006, p. 1202). This may best be achieved by engaging individual clients, families, and whole communities in programs that place emphasis on individual and social growth and change in response to adversity. Programs that give due acknowledgement to community leaders and indigenous wisdom, help build community capacity, ensure cultural salience and significance, and work to minimize power differentials between health professionals and local healing and support systems, are more likely to facilitate what Papadopoulus (2007) has labeled adversity-activated development. Such partnerships may also serve to increase the levels of mental health utilization among refugee populations by decreasing stigma and engaging in culturally meaningful ways (e.g. see Nadeau & Measham, 2005; Wong et al., 2006)” (Murray et al. 2010).