

Refugee Relocation in Regional Victoria

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A Partnership

This project is a partnership between VicHealth, the host communities, the migrating community and their advocates. We have been working with the Horn of Africa community, (in this case HACN), Warrnambool, Swan Hill and those that are relocating or have relocated.

What Underpins the Work?

Mental Health and Wellbeing is the central focus of this evaluation process.

Mental health and wellbeing is I think, a reflection of ones background, opportunities and ones aspirations. If you don't have a house, and you don't know where to go for information, if you are separated from family and feel isolated, if you cant communicate, if you cannot provide for your children: how can you have a sense of good mental health and wellbeing?

Melika Sheiekh-Eldin

The four key benchmarks established by VicHealth are:

- Economic Participation
- Freedom from Discrimination
- Social connectedness
- General feeling of health and wellbeing

HORN OF AFRICA COUNTRIES



Sudan

Ethiopia

Eritrea

Somalia





War





MIGRATION

- ★ Refugees
- ★ Humanitarian entrants
- ★ Family reunion
- ★ Skilled migration





The Horn of African people share common settlement issues:



★ Cultural differences;



★ Limited English Language and/or Literacy skills;



★ Unemployed with limited employment prospects.



Community circumstances and issues



- Strong motivation to be economically independent
- Strong motivation to lead productive and useful lives in their new community.
- Significant barriers in finding or maintaining employment;
- Poverty and social isolation.



Horn of Africa - Regional Relocation Project

- ★ The Project aims to assist in relocating members from Horn of African community in Swan Hill and Warrnambool region by providing sustainable, long-term employment and business opportunities.



There has been significant movement in one community and almost none in the other. Why?

- ★ Relocation packages have been a significant factor.
- ★ Maintaining two houses for families that are separated.
- ★ We are exploring further the idea of relating the stages of adjustment to successful relocation.

UNHCR Stages of Adjustment

The Honeymoon Stage

The honeymoon stage is connected to refugee preconceptions of what his/her new life will look like in his/her host country.

The Confrontation Stage

The confrontation stage for new settlers is representative of a range of emotions and reality checks.

The Adjustment and Reorientation Stage

The adjustment stage is categorised by a willingness to re-examine taken for granted assumptions about resettlement in a host country.

The Reconstruction Stage

The reconstruction stage is the stage where new settlers feel most at ease

What are the Issues?

- The driver of the Project – needs organisational capacity and a framework of practice that understands how to build community capacity.
- Economic Development plans need to be undertaken to really understand the employment that is available with employers who need to own the project.

It is about everyones sustainability!

- Planning with key stakeholders is essential particularly in the area of ESL, in TAFE and in Schools.
- Cultural sensitivity and service planning is essential with services themselves - otherwise you are destined to head for lots of bushfire service provision.
- Community infrastructure needs to be reviewed – early intervention, dental, counseling and then family reunification means settlement (as opposed to relocation) services as well.

Systemic Issues

- ★ Housing, public versus private
- ★ Asking people to give up their public housing is very tough
- ★ Employment of Choice
- ★ ESL on the job
- ★ Everyone operates on critical mass – so how do you fund regional relocation (and when family sponsorship occurs, settlement services) in small numbers