

NEWSLETTER JULY 2014

WELCOME

Welcome to the first “Meaning of Rights in refugee settlement” ARC linkage project newsletter.

We have had a very busy six months, setting up the practical infrastructure to support the project and trialing the first stage of fieldwork in Townsville. This trial indicated ways we can refine and amend the methodology slightly, to produce the best results possible and to address all of the project objectives.

Geraldine Doney will be contacting you over the next week to make arrangements for an initial visit to each partner organisation to talk with your staff, partner agencies and refugee communities, and to check your availability to join a second partner meeting later this year.

We have also continued work on the literature review, and building a strong theoretical framework for the analysis of the empirical work.

Details of these activities can be found below, We are keen to get your input into the on-going progress of the project so please be in touch any time, and we will also review progress more formally at the next partner meeting.

THE PROJECT TEAM

We have welcomed three new members to the team. Geraldine Doney, Kristy Ward and Marcela Garrett from the Centre for Refugee Research have joined as part time Research Associates. They have all worked with us on a range of overseas and locally based refugee projects and bring a wealth of experience in the sector to their work.

From late July, Geraldine Doney has taken over from Bec Eckert as the overall Project Manager. Bec will continue to be involved, but because of her teaching and other commitments, she will have more of a background role for the second half of this year. Eileen continues as the main academic advisor working on methodology and the theoretical framework.

Geraldine can be contacted on g.doney@unsw.edu.au, 02 9385 1961 or 0411051013.

Marcela and Kristy will be involved in building the theoretical framework, and will participate in the fieldwork.

Rochelle Baughan continues as our hardworking Research Assistant, with responsibility for the day to day administration of the project.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

PARTNER RESOURCE MATERIAL

Several resources have been developed to assist you to share information on the project with refugees and staff from your organisations, and with other services or organisations you work with. These include

- a project brochure,
- a brochure with information on each of the partner organisations and research team members
- Powerpoint slides that introduce and provide background information on the project.

These will be emailed to partners with this newsletter or the following few days. Please check the information in these documents that relevant to your organisation, in particular the partner information brochure, and advise Rochelle or Geraldine of any changes. The materials will be added to the Google Docs repository and the project webpage, details of which follow.

You will notice from the letterhead of this newsletter and the other documents, that we are using a shortened project name *The meanings of rights in refugee settlement*. The full project title will continue to be used in formal documentation of the project, and this shorter version used as the working title. We have also finessed the aim, objectives and outcomes of the project and tried to express them in clear language. These are included in the project brochure and slides.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The team is building on the literature review already undertaken, currently focusing on the historical and philosophical basis of the human rights framework, political, cultural and social responses to human rights in different regions of the world, and areas of contention in human rights. This literature review will continue through the life of the project. It will inform the development of a theoretical framework with which to analyse the outcomes of the fieldwork and will contribute to the first set of academic papers. We have had several team meetings to discuss the theoretical aspects of the project, as it is an important foundation for both conceptual development and fieldwork activities. We hope you can join us at the next partner meeting so that we can benefit from your input and experience in making links between theory and practice.

Relevant literature will be uploaded to Google Docs. An annotated bibliography and Endnote library is being developed and will continue to be built on for the life of the project.

Partners are encouraged to send in any literature that they find of interest and relevance to the project, including findings from past and current research projects. Copies of documents or relevant links can be emailed to Rochelle at rochelle.baughan@unsw.edu.au. With the permission of the person who shared the resources, Rochelle will upload these to be shared with the rest of the research team.

ETHICS

Ethics approval for the project was given in January 2014. All projects conducted by the Centre for Refugee Research require approval from the UNSW Human Research Ethics Committee, and are subject to rigorous ethical requirements. Partner organisations are also required by the University to comply with the ethics agreement. As discussed at our first partner meeting, CRR also undertakes additional ethical agreements with our partners and fieldwork participants, to ensure confidentiality and to assist in building trust.

A copy of the ethics-approved information and consent form is available through Google docs. The project ethics approval number is: HC13362. If you have any concerns or complaints at any time in the study, you can contact the Ethics Secretariat at the University of New South Wales quoting this reference number. Telephone: 02 9385 4234 Fax machine: 02 9385 6648 Email: ethics.sec@unsw.edu.au. This information is included on the information and consent form.

GOOGLE DOCS

An online repository of project information is being established through Google Docs. Instructions on how to access Google Docs are attached to this newsletter. The research team will regularly upload project information and relevant documentation, for access by all Partners. Project documents relevant to a wider audience will be available on the project web site.

We have not used Google docs to share project information before. We chose it as the

preferred resource-sharing tool for various reasons, and welcome your feedback. If you have trouble using Google docs or have suggestions about other ways to share project information across all research partners, please contact Rochelle.

WEBSITE

Rochelle is developing the project webpages, which will be hosted on the Centre for Refugee Research website. It will include links to individual partner organisations brochures and presentations. Project reports and other documents for public dissemination will be uploaded to this website. If you would like additional content added to the site, please contact Rochelle with your suggestions or additions.

<http://www.crr.unsw.edu.au/research-projects/meanings-of-rights-in-settlement/>

Currently, the websites of all research centres in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences are being up-dated. The URL for the project will remain the same, but the appearance of the website may change. It has not yet been confirmed when this update will be finalised.

FIELDWORK

TOWNSVILLE FIELD VISIT

Report from Rebecca Eckert

The first project fieldwork took place in Townsville in May. Bec Eckert and Meg Davis, Partner Investigator from TMSG, co-facilitated an introductory workshop on the project with 32 local service providers. The purpose of this half day workshop was to introduce the framework of the project and the research team to local service providers, and to explore their expectations for the project. We explore issues such as where services learn about rights, what relevance rights have to their everyday work, and how they are perceived, and what they would like to achieve out of participating in the project. Representatives from a wide range of services attended including settlement providers, police, housing and counseling services. The workshop was very well received, with a number of organisations indicating an interest in ongoing participation in the project.

For many of the services this was the first time they were able to reflect on where the notion and concept of 'rights' and their work came together. It was evident there were many different messages and understandings about rights in the community and between service providers.

"Most importantly is the message within this discussion ...how do we successfully explain this to new migrants especially when we all differ in our views? So collectively as service providers, how do we make sure we all have the same message, the same understanding of what is human rights, because it can create confusion when you hear different messages from different service providers." (Service provider)

The knowledge and understanding services shared about rights was gathered through a mix of formal and informal processes. Much of their understanding came from relationships and experiences with others such as work and family, but all agreed this was underpinned strongly by policy and legislative frameworks. One participant commented that:

"We learn about human rights often when you do something wrong...when you get in trouble with the law, or if something happens in your life, like an assault. It affects you, and suddenly you know all about it". (Service provider)

Participants also shared a number of examples of where human rights appear in their work. For some, this was in all aspects of what they did on a day to day basis, or more localised with links made to specific tasks or approaches. For others it was very much linked to organisational culture and how notions of rights were reflected in the organisation as a whole.

"I work for it, I live it, I breathe it!" (Service provider)

As a closing activity, participants shared their expectations for the project. Their overwhelming desire was for something tangible that would bring about positive change to their practice and the communities they are working to support.

"We want more real outcomes. We want action on the ground, a positive experience" (Service provider)

The outcomes from this initial workshop in Townsville have highlighted both the importance of spending considerable time on relationship building, as well as the need to include a series of introductory sessions on the project for refugee communities as well as services.

FUTURE FIELDWORK AND PROJECT PLANS

Similar workshops will be held in all research sites in the next six months. This stage 1 fieldwork will lay the foundation for subsequent stages of fieldwork and will assist in consolidating expectations for the project. It is anticipated that separate introductory workshops with service providers and refugee communities will be held in each location. Geraldine and Rochelle will be in touch with partner organisations to discuss possible visit dates and other logistics for the fieldwork in the week after sending this newsletter.

We would also like to convene another partners meeting before the end of the year. The purposes of this meeting will be to share views about the theoretical aspects and development of the project, review a matrix activity being developed for stage 2 fieldwork, and generally review the conceptual and practical progress of the project as an overall research team. Hopefully all partners will be able to attend a meeting over two days – we know you are all busy but it would be great to be able to be in the same place to consider, discuss, and maybe argue! Geraldine will check your availability for this when she contacts you to discuss fieldwork dates. Rochelle will assist in travel arrangements once dates are agreed.

It has been exciting building this initial groundwork for the project and we look forward to working with you as we undertake the fieldwork with each of your organisations later this year and in 2015.

Geraldine Doney, on behalf of the CRR team

Eileen Pittaway, Linda Bartolomei, Richard Hugman, Bec Eckert, Rochelle Baughan, Kristy Ward and Marcela Garrett.

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