

The meanings of rights across cultures:
an exploration of the interpretation of the human rights
framework in refugee settlement.

A research partnership to improve settlement outcomes

THE RESEARCH PROJECT TEAM – ORGANISATIONS AND INVESTIGATORS

This exciting project will explore how understandings of human rights influence refugee settlement in Australia. It is being undertaken by the UNSW Centre for Refugee Research (CRR) in partnership with refugee settlement service providers: AMES Victoria, QPASTT, STARTTS and Townville Multicultural Support Group (TMSG).



The Centre for Refugee Research (CRR) is an interdisciplinary research centre at the University of New South Wales. CRR focuses on international refugee flows, internally displaced people, forced migration and resettlement issues. It conducts research, education and advocacy programs, partnering with a range of organisations in relation to

- The identification of and response to the most vulnerable refugees, in particular women and girls at risk.
- The link between refugee conditions overseas and the resettlement experience in developed countries

CRR adopts a human rights framework and principles of social justice and community development in all its work.

CRR is the administrating organisation.



Centre for Refugee Research

Chief Investigator: Honorary Professor Eileen Pittaway

Eileen is recognised internationally as an expert in the area of refugee studies and has published widely in this field. In June 2000 she was appointed Director of the Centre for Refugee Research. She has worked with Richard Hugman and Linda Bartolomei on many research projects related to refugee women at risk and older refugees, co-authoring occasional papers and journal articles. Eileen has conducted research and provided training to refugees, UN and NGO staff in refugee camps and urban settings, acted as technical advisor to a number of projects, and evaluated or supported humanitarian and development projects in Kenya, Thailand, Ethiopia, Bougainville, Egypt and Sri Lanka.

Eileen has permanent accreditation to meetings of the Economic and Social Council of the UN and UNHCR Geneva. She has undertaken evaluations of the effectiveness of UNHCR systems and key UNHCR policy documents. Research outcomes of previous ARC research have had significant impacts on national and international refugee policy. One of the most important of these was the adoption of a United Nations "Conclusion" (soft international law) on the protection of refugee women and girls in 2006. Since 2005, Eileen and Linda have completed eleven "missions" with UNHCR Geneva,

developing a range of tools to support the protection and human rights of refugee populations.

Chief Investigator: Dr Linda Bartolomei

Linda Bartolomei is the Director of the Centre for Refugee Research and the co-coordinator of the Master of Development Studies program in the School of Social Sciences at UNSW. She lectures in Refugee Studies, Community Development and Advocacy at Masters and Undergraduate levels.

Since 2001, Linda has been involved in action-based research projects that explore the challenges associated with identifying and responding to refugee women and girls at risk and other vulnerable groups in Asia, Africa, South America and Australia. The results have had significant impact on research and policy and were instrumental in the introduction of the Conclusion on the Protection of Women and Girls at Risk in 2006 and the development of UNHCR's Heightened Risk Identification Tool.

Linda has contributed to several UNHCR missions to support the implementation of the Conclusion and further develop the Tool. She regularly presents research findings at UNHCR Geneva. One of the significant international UNHCR refugee community development projects Linda undertook with Eileen was "Survivors, Protectors, Providers". This project involved Dialogues with refugee and internally displaced women and girls, men and boys, in India, Colombia, Jordan, Uganda, Zambia, Thailand, Finland and Australia, as part of the activities for the 60th Anniversary of the Refugee Convention.

Linda is currently leading a practice based research project in New Delhi

India which is modelling refugee led community development and social support. The project, funded by the DIBP Displaced Persons Program, is being implemented in direct partnership with refugee communities from Afghanistan and Somalia with the support of UNHCR and BOSCO Delhi.

**Chief Investigator:
Professor Richard Hugman**

Richard Hugman is a Professor of Social Work at UNSW. His current research includes developing new approaches in ethics for the caring professions, and the application of new ethical theory to research undertaken with refugees (in conjunction with the Centre for Refugee Research). He is also working on the critical analysis of international social work, with particular reference to culture, difference and shared values. Since 2004, Richard has worked with UNICEF Vietnam to advise the Vietnam Government on the development of professional social work. He is also the ethics commissioner of the International Federation of Social Workers and was a member of the 'expert panel' which drafted the current international statement on ethics for social work. Previously he has undertaken various research projects concerning late life, community and social welfare, mental health, the organisation of social services. Richard is an international editorial advisor to Social Work Education and Ethics & Social Welfare.

**Senior Research Associate:
Geraldine Doney**

Geraldine has worked with CRR since 2007 and teaches in the Masters of Development Studies at UNSW. She is also undertaking a PhD exploring the politics and power relations behind the activism of women's organisations from

Burma. Geraldine has a particular interest in the diverse and innovative ways that refugee individuals, organisations and communities use their resources and knowledge to provide protection and support within their own communities, and engage with other stakeholders to advocate for their rights.

Geraldine has been involved in a range of local and international CRR research and advocacy projects with refugee communities. She plays a strong role in the Centre's overseas internship program, leading annual internships to Geneva and Thailand, and facilitating the participation of people from refugee backgrounds in UN and other international meetings.

**Senior Research Associate:
Dr Rebecca Eckert**

Rebecca is a Senior Research Associate with CRR and a Lecturer in the School of Social Sciences where she teaches in the Master of Development Studies and the Bachelor of Social Work. Rebecca has worked extensively with refugee women at risk and their families across urban and regional areas within Australia and overseas in countries of asylum including Thailand and India. She has produced a series of community education resources and training packages relating to women at risk and regional settlement, and provides training to practitioners in the field including service providers and government officials. Rebecca's current work is focused on the identification and response to risks and human rights abuses experienced by refugee women in settlement, and the development of indicators of successful settlement for resettling refugee women.

Senior Research Associate: Kristy Ward

Kristy has over ten years experience in international development in Southeast and South Asia, including extensive experience with NGOs in implementing and evaluating development programs in education, public health and gender.

Kristy is a senior Research Associate and PhD student with CRR and has been involved in projects focused on community-based protection for refugees in New Delhi, India, and measuring social capital amongst resettled refugees in Australia. In 2010 Kristy was awarded an Endeavour Research Fellowship to undertake research on gender and rural-urban migration in Cambodia. Her PhD explores women's experience of community, identity, trust and violence in Cambodia's urban informal settlements including a particular focus on women's engagement with, and resistance to, development discourse in this context.

Research Assistant: Rochelle Baughan

Rochelle is a qualified social worker, working as a research assistant at the CRR. She is currently studying a Master of Development Studies at UNSW and tutoring in the UNSW Bachelor of Social Work program.

Rochelle began working at the Centre for Refugee Research as a third year social work intern in 2012, participating in community workshops and consultations in Sydney, and being involved in a refugee-led community development project in New Delhi. Since the internship, Rochelle has been

involved in various work with the Centre, including a project focusing on women at risk, conducting an evaluation of a local community cultural development program, and assisting in the editing of papers and reports. Rochelle has prior experience as a social work intern at Family and Community Services, and working as a youth worker, volunteer coordinator and legal secretary within family law and child protection matters.

Research Associate: Marcela Garrett

Originally from Argentina, Marcela has used her teaching experience in Early Childhood and TESOL to work with children inside Villawood Detention Centre and as a teacher and administrator with the Refugee Language Program at Sydney University through the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies. She has also taught women from refugee backgrounds through Outreach TAFE at various community locations around Sydney.

In 2011, whilst completing her Masters in Social Development at UNSW, Marcela was part of the delegation working in Jordan with refugee women and girls for the International Women's Dialogues. She has provided support in various CRR projects, and her most recent involvement has been to oversee the development of a community-led project focusing on self-protection of Somali refugee women and girls in Nairobi, Kenya, in a project funded by the Displaced Persons Program through the Department of Immigration and Citizenship in 2012.



**AMES Victoria (Research sites:
Melbourne and Geelong)**

AMES provides settlement services throughout Victoria to assist refugees in their first years in Australia, and in particular in their first six months. These include on-arrival settlement support through the Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS), English language and literacy training, vocational training and employment services.

AMES has a number of outlets within Victoria, including Geelong, a proposed site for this research. We have partnered with a range of community organisations, volunteer groups, governments, TAFEs and universities to raise awareness, undertake research and build strong networks to inform the delivery of our services. Our Research and Policy unit works to ensure that any research is used constructively to guide the policy and practice of our work in order to achieve the best possible settlement outcomes for our clients.

**Partner Investigator:
Dr Melika Yassin Sheikh-Eldin**

Melika is the Manager of Settlement Delivery Support Services, Partnerships and Community Engagement within AMES Settlement Division. This role involves being responsible for strategic community relations involving ongoing dialogue and capacity building partnerships with refugee communities and sector organisations. Melika also mentors in and oversees the successful and internationally recognised 'Community Guides Network'; a bespoke, best practice program using

members of CALD communities as integration guides for newly arrived refugees from the same cultural and linguistic background. Melika delivers new policy frameworks via formal consultation with community members and incorporates these learnings into the AMES Settlement Services model, while working with Managers to understand and incorporate the resulting implications for AMES wider education and employment programs.

Melika has represented AMES and presented at UNHCR Conferences in Geneva since 2007, National and International conferences and she was part of the 2008 UNHCR Mission to Sudan and the 2011 UNHCR Refugee Women's Dialogue in Jordan. Melika has been recognised for her accomplishments, being awarded winner of the 100 most influential Africans in Australia award (2012) and finalist for the 2010 Voices of Courage Award (Women's Refugee Commission, New York).

Secondary contact: Ramesh Kumar

Ramesh holds Bachelor and Master qualifications in Social Work, as well as postgraduate Studies in Urban and Social Planning and Environmental Management. Ramesh is the General Manager, Settlement and Asylum Seeker Programs of AMES. His portfolio comprises over 600 staff and volunteers within a diverse multicultural setting across 10 offices in the state of Victoria. He liaises with a large range of key internal and external stakeholders, including all levels of government (local, state and federal), as well as regulatory bodies, corporations and community groups. He has been nominated on several external national committees as well as various international working groups/committees.



QPASTT

Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT) (Research site: Brisbane)

QPASTT is a community based service providing counselling, support and community development for refugee survivors of torture and trauma at an individual, family and community level.

The organisation puts a strong emphasis on community engagement through running psycho-educational groups, outreach to regional areas and schools, participation in refugee community events and the initiation of community development activities that aid in community healing and recovery from the experience of torture and trauma. QPASTT works with children, young people, adults and families. QPASTT work within a strong recovery framework and seek to address the multiple issues of loss that typifies the experience of becoming a refugee and the added issues of psychological recovery from trauma.

Partner Investigator: Megan Leitz

Megan Leitz is the Direct Services Manager at QPASTT. Her educational background is a Bachelor degree in Science and a Masters in Counselling. During her career Megan has worked in the U.S. as a clinician at a Mental Health Centre and as the Coordinator

of the Substance Abuse Program. She also provided counselling and group facilitation at a Domestic Violence service and provided debriefing for emergency services workers.

In Australia Megan has worked as a family counsellor and group facilitator and as the Coordinator for a Respectful Relationships Project funded by FaHCSIA. Her current role as Direct Services Manager at QPASTT involves providing effective service delivery governance across the organisation to ensure organisational compliance with current and accepted practices and to make certain service delivery maximises client outcomes.

Secondary contact: Dan Nguyen

Dan Nguyen is the Capacity Building worker at QPASTT, enhancing service providers' capacity to work with clients from refugee backgrounds through project collaborations and provision of consultation and training.

Dan came to Australia in 1979 from Vietnam, after having spent a few months in a Malaysian refugee camp, and completed secondary education in 1984. He has considerable knowledge of the social issues faced by refugee communities, in particularly the Vietnamese community, through his own personal experience, as well as through his various positions within the Vietnamese community positions of Vice President of the Vietnamese Youth Club and Vietnamese Community in Australia Queensland. Dan completed a Bachelor of Psychology with Honours in 2005 and has gained clinical experience in the areas of relationships and addiction, from working with clients from mainstream, Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.



Services for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS) (Research sites: Sydney and Coffs Harbour)

STARTTS is a leading organisation for the treatment of torture and trauma survivors. Their clients are individuals and communities from refugee and refugee-like situations who have survived torture and other traumatic experiences in the context of organised violence. STARTTS take a holistic approach to work with survivors, providing a range of individual, group and community services, and working to develop and implement ways of facilitating the healing process of their clients.

STARTTS assist and resource individuals and other organisations to provide appropriate, effective and culturally sensitive services to refugees. They also work with organisations and individuals to lobby and advocate on behalf of individuals and refugee communities, undertake research and publish articles and resources relevant to their work.

Partner Investigator: Mariano Coello

Mariano is an expert clinician and researcher in torture and trauma. The articles he has co-authored and previous research projects he has been involved in have been routinely cited by and used to support lobbying activities

by refugee advocacy groups to challenge government policies on refugees and asylum seekers.

Mariano's work has been particularly influential in raising awareness of the impact of mandatory detention on the mental health of detainees. This has led to the introduction of more comprehensive torture and trauma support assistance in this area. Mariano has also made substantial contributions to the design and delivery of trainings in dealing with psychosocial issues, for many professionals delivering services to refugees. Mariano is routinely called upon to sit on panels and participate in round table discussions on refugee and asylum seeker issues, including most recently, being on the expert panel for refugees and asylum seekers in the Australian Guidelines for the Treatment of Adults with Acute Stress Disorder and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.

Secondary contact: Jasmina Bajraktarevic-Hayward

Jasmina is a social worker whose role is as Community Services Coordinator at STARTTS. Jasmina came to Australia in 1993 as a refugee from Bosnia-Herzegovina. Jasmina's involvement in the refugee field dates back to 1991, when she became involved in work with Bosnian refugees in Croatia through "Suncokret-Centre for Grassroots Relief Work", an implementing partner of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Jasmina commenced her work at STARTTS in the position of Counsellor/Project Officer (communities of former Yugoslavia) in 1994. Her knowledge and expertise range from individual trauma counselling, through group work and community development to management and staff supervision.



**Townsville Multicultural Support Group
(Research site: Townsville)**

TMSG is a North Queensland community based organisation in with a history of refugee resettlement since the 1990s. Its genesis is in the strength and resourcefulness of a group of migrant women in the early 90s who recognised the importance of practical grassroots responses to the needs of refugees, particularly women. TMSG is funded by government to provide initial and longer-term settlement support to refugees, as well as complementary programs. TMSG is part of a larger network of providers under 'Community Action for Multiculturalism', an advocacy program promoting equity and access across sectors of health, education, family and legal matters. TMSG delivers a range of programs in partnership with the Local City Council around creating increased understanding of refugee needs and take local, national and international interns and students to engage in practical work experience.

Partner Investigator: Meg Davis

Meg Davis manages TMSG. She is a social worker by profession and is aware of always learning from the people she has had the privilege of working with across homelessness, mental health, family support services, and for the past 15 years, refugees and migrants. Meg is committed to reflecting on practice from a human rights perspective.

Meg has had considerable impact on the refugee field in her role as a service provider, advocate and researcher. She has shown a strong commitment to supporting culturally and linguistically diverse women to speak up for their needs and having their opinions heard at all levels of government in order to influence policy and program delivery. In 2009, Meg was instrumental in the Townsville City Council declaring Townsville a "Refugee Welcome Zone". TMSG has also been selected as a key site for the settlement of women at risk.

Meg has worked in partnership with CRR across a number of projects in India and Thailand, assisting to conduct consultation workshops and the delivery of training to groups of urban refugees in counselling skills and advocacy. Meg was proud to assist with the Australian Refugee Women's Dialogues 2011

Meg has been an invited keynote speaker and presenter at national conferences focused on regional settlement, refugee issues and the particular experiences of refugee and migrant women.

Secondary contact: Gabe Cairns

Gabe is a social worker who has enjoyed working across a range of settlement roles within the Townsville Multicultural Support Group since 2007. She has been a case manager for 3 years and complex case manager for 2 years, whilst also contributing to the orientation program for new arrivals. Gabe is currently working as the coordinator for the 'Many Cultures One Community' Program which aims to promote greater harmony between indigenous, migrant and refugee communities.