



# Diversity



On the gray line I will stand  
and be a French scientist and  
I will have only high classes  
and have the highest safety in  
Australia.



# CONNECT



# the GOOD STARTS

A RESEARCH PROJECT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE FROM REFUGEE BACKGROUNDS

## WHAT IS THIS RESEARCH PROJECT ABOUT?

Making a home in a new country is a difficult challenge for all people. For young people, the experience can be especially difficult as they leave behind their friends, family and community. For young people who have come to Australia because of conflict in their home country, there are extra issues they must deal with.

This research project documents the experiences of young people from refugee backgrounds during their first five years in Australia. The aim of this study is: (a) to *identify* the factors that assist young people to achieve successful transitions during the settlement process and (b) to *describe in depth*, the contexts, settings and social processes that support, enhance and facilitate health and well-being amongst refugee young people over time.

The study is being carried out by the Refugee Health Research Centre (RHRC) at La Trobe University and the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (VFST), in collaboration with the University of Melbourne. It is being funded by the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation who have identified the health and wellbeing of newly arrived youth as a key priority.

The study will take place over five years beginning in 2004 and ending in 2008. We will work closely with English Language

Schools/Centres (ELs/ELCs) and other community groups to involve young people and their families. A major focus is on key transitions for young people during settlement, from the ELs/ELC into mainstream school, to tertiary education or the workforce.

## WHAT ARE THE PROJECT OBJECTIVES?

The specific objectives of the research are to:

- identify the psychosocial determinants at the individual and community level, that promote health and well-being of newly arrived refugee youth over time
- describe how young refugees build social capital
- describe how young refugees re-establish a sense of coherence and control over their lives and futures
- identify and describe the factors within specific settings (school, family, community) that young refugees regard as health enhancing
- explain the ways in which specific settings act to support physical, mental and social well-being

## WHO WILL PARTICIPATE?

This project will invite 200 young people aged 12-18 years who have recently arrived in Australia, to participate with their families. Consent will be obtained from parents/guardians for permission to allow their children to be involved in the project.

## WHAT WILL THE RESEARCH PROJECT INVOLVE?

Young people will be asked to tell us what helps them settle into school, make new friends, and get on with their life in Australia. We are also interested in the problems that young people face and the ways that these problems might be solved.

The first part of the project will take place in the classrooms of English Language Centres or community groups. Young people will be asked to provide information about their life in Australia and about the things they enjoy doing at school and in their community. The project will consist of activities for young people including drawing pictures and taking photographs of the places they live and the people they are close to. Young people will also be asked to tell us about the kind of future they would like to have and how they can achieve their goals.

We will contact these young people and their families every 6-12 months over five years, so we can find out how they are doing and gather further information about their settlement experiences over time.

We will also invite young people and their families to participate in more in-depth parts of this project where we will be asking them to tell us more about settling in Australia.

## HOW WILL THE INFORMATION COLLECTED BE USED?

The information collected will be used in the following ways:

- it will provide information for education, employment and training sectors about how to best support newly arrived refugee young people to achieve successful outcomes after they leave school;
- it will contribute to a better understanding of health and settlement issues for refugee young people and their families;
- it will give the young people who participate an opportunity to be involved in action research where they can identify issues important to them, and what assists them with settlement and related transitions;
- it will provide information to teachers in ELS/Cs and in mainstream schools, about the experiences of newly arrived refugee students relating to settlement and wellbeing;
- it will provide information to schools about how students fare after their transition to mainstream schools;
- it will inform health, education and community policies for refugee youth.



## TO FIND OUT MORE

For more information about the project, or if you have any questions contact either:

**Christine Bakopanos** Refugee Health Research Centre  
A LaTrobe University/VFST partnership  
Telephone +61 3 9389 8946  
Facsimile +61 3 9387 0828  
Email bakopanosc@survivorsvic.org.au or

**Sandy Gifford** Refugee Health Research Centre  
A LaTrobe University/VFST partnership  
Telephone +61 3 9389 8919  
Facsimile +61 3 9387 0828  
Email sgifford@latrobe.edu.au

**RHRC website** [www.latrobe.edu.au/rhrc](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/rhrc)  
**VFST website** [www.survivorsvic.org.au](http://www.survivorsvic.org.au)

## THIS STUDY HAS BEEN APPROVED BY:

La Trobe University, Human Ethics  
Telephone 9479 1443

Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture, Ethics  
Telephone 9388 0022

Department of Education & Training, Research Branch  
Telephone 9637 2349

The University of Melbourne, Human Research Ethics  
Telephone 8344 7507

If you have any concerns about this study you may call any of the Ethics Committees listed above.

**BROCHURE & GOOD STARTS LOGO** designland 0408 056 150  
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