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Front cover illustrations by Kat
Chadwick Illustrations. (Originally presented as case study illustrations in Gifford, S.M., Correa-Velez, I. and Sampson, R. (2009) 'Good Starts for recently arrived youth with refugee backgrounds: Promoting wellbeing in the first three years of settlement in Melbourne, Australia'. Melbourne: La Trobe Refugee Research Centre, La Trobe University.)

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The La Trobe Refugee Research Centre – LaRRC (formerly the Refugee Health Research Centre – RHRC) takes a collaborative and interdisciplinary approach to research in the field of refugee and forced migration studies.

As part of La Trobe University’s School of Social Sciences, and a core affiliate of the Institute for Human Security, LaRRC works to promote the wellbeing, participation and social inclusion of people with refugee backgrounds through applied and foundation research, teaching, continuing education and professional development.

Organised around the key themes of displacement, flight and refuge LaRRC aims to raise public awareness and contribute to national global debate about the causes and consequences of forced displacement and their impacts on human security. A key focus of LaRRC is to investigate the social determinants of wellbeing of people with refugee backgrounds, the contexts that promote optimal resettlement and the socio-political factors that hinder or promote social inclusion while also promoting access and equity to health and social services for communities with refugee backgrounds and raising awareness of refugee issues through teaching in the undergraduate curriculum across University faculties.
2009 marked the La Trobe Refugee Research Centre’s fifth year and was a year of completion and new directions.

We successfully finished two major research studies that focused on promoting the wellbeing of youth with refugee backgrounds. We launched a range of new research materials including DVDs, reports and journal publications. We introduced a new name for the centre, now the La Trobe Refugee Research Centre (LaRRC), which highlights the broadening of our research focus. We had two PhD students graduate and continued in our support of students with refugee backgrounds who are undertaking university studies.

During 2009 the research activities of the LaRRC have been greatly informed by the broader challenges of refugee resettlement in Australia and elsewhere. A key issue we have tackled is that of racism and other forms of discrimination that are experienced by many recently arrived individuals. Here as in other countries, these many forms of discrimination act as major barriers to resettlement and to wellbeing. These are issues that we have addressed in our research and in the everyday lives of those with whom we work and collaborate.

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During 2009 the Good Starts for Refugee Youth study was completed. The last round of data collection was finished in early 2009 and by the end of the year we had produced a final report which highlights both the high hopes and optimism that these youth bring to their resettlement and the challenges they face in making their dreams come true.

The Good Starts Arts project was brought to a close during the year with the screening of the DVD 4us: Young people with refugee backgrounds living in Australia at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image in Federation Square, Melbourne on World Refugee Day. This was a public showcasing of four documentaries focusing on the everyday experiences of young people with refugee backgrounds. In particular these short films explore the experiences of integration and settlement, discrimination, identity and becoming ‘at home’. The launch provided a forum for the project’s researchers, film-makers and young people who collaborated in the production of the film to discuss the issues and themes with a public audience.

All of our work during 2009 has been heavily influenced by the outcomes of our recent studies, with particular reference to Good Starts, Good Starts Arts and SettleMEN, where racism and social exclusion have emerged as key barriers to wellbeing and settlement in Australia. Our findings regarding these issues were reflected in numerous pieces of work throughout the year, including an opinion piece and a LaRRC collaborative submission on human rights and social inclusion to the Australian Human Rights Commission on African Australians.

We congratulate Dr Tulsi Bisht who completed his PhD during the year entitled ‘Displacement resettlement and everyday life: an ethnographic study of people displaced by Tehri Dam in India’. We also congratulate Dr Meredith Levi for completion of her Doctor of Health Psychology, with her thesis entitled ‘Changing experiences of motherhood: the impact of refugee experiences on parenting adolescents’.

Dr Ignacio Correa-Velez and his Queensland-based team of researchers completed the third round of data collection for the SettleMEN project during
2009. The project is a collaborative effort between LaRRC and the Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT). This team has been working successfully throughout the year to collect data and report on the findings of this broad-reaching study into refugee men’s health and wellbeing.

Sadly, LaRRC mourned the tragic death of one of the members of the SettleMEN team, Mr Stephen Yanga, who drowned while on holidays at the Gold Coast. We lend our support and sympathies to Stephen’s family and friends, as well as to his close colleagues in this project.

Mr Yusuf Sheikh Omar (LaRRC postgraduate student) and Ms Saharla Hassan (third year Bachelor of International Relations student placement) organized a very successful one-day Somali youth conference, the focus of which was education and intergenerational issues facing Somali youth living in Australia. The Somali community was well represented at this event and they were joined by representatives from state and federal bodies including the Australian Federal Police, service providers and community organizations. The conference provided a forum for community discussion and debate about many difficult issues facing the Somali community and lead to the development of a number of strategies designed to tackle these in the future.

LaRRC’s recognized strength in working in close collaboration with other organizations continued throughout 2009 and remains a core mission of the centre for the future. During the year we completed a study of family reunion in partnership with Foundation House, under the leadership of Dr Brooke Wilmsen-McDonald. We also worked closely with the Centre for Multicultural Youth, the City of Melbourne and the Association for Progressive Communications to kick off the new study, Home Lands, which is being co-lead by Dr Raelene Wilding from La Trobe University’s Sociology Program. This innovative project is exploring how digital TV and other media might play an important role in helping youth maintain social connections across national borders. Ms Robyn Sampson, a former Research Officer with the Good Starts Study, began her PhD research on alternatives to immigration detention in partnership with the International Detention Coalition. Our collaboration with Dr Savitri Taylor and Ms Brynna Rafferty from the La Trobe University School of Law continued with the study of Australia’s border control policy on the human rights of asylum seekers in Indonesia and PNG – the final report of which will be forthcoming in 2010.

2009 also saw Dr Celia McMichael and Dr Sue Chaplin working on issues of climate-related displacement. Celia’s focus was on the health impacts, while Sue explored the gaps in social science research relating to climate-related displacement in South Asia. Dr Celia McMichael also continued to publish on issues of sexual health among recently arrived youth.

LaRRC continues to enjoy being part of a robust and exciting environment in the School of Social Sciences at La Trobe University and a core affiliate of the University’s Institute for Human Security. During 2009 this new positioning for LaRRC was cultivated, fostering student supervision, teaching opportunities and interdisciplinary research partnerships across the University.

Finally, LaRRC participated in the UNHCR Regional Consultations with academics and NGOs during which we were able to push forward an important research agenda for forced migration in Australian and the region.

We are looking forward to an exciting year in 2010 with new projects coming on line and important opportunities for translating our research findings into practice and policy.

Sandy Gifford
Home Lands: Displaced youth and the development of positive transnational identities in a supportive local context
(Funded by an Australia Research Council Linkage Grant, the City of Melbourne (Community Cultural Development Program) and the Cultural Development Network, in association with the Centre for Multicultural Youth and the Association for Progressive Communications (Australia))

Many young refugees struggle to develop positive cultural identities. The Home Lands project is investigating the role communication technologies can play in connecting young refugees to their diasporic communities and whether this assists them in developing positive social and cultural identities.

The aim of this project is to investigate the ways in which information communication technologies can promote positive transnational identities among refugee youth in Australia. A series of workshops with groups of young people of refugee backgrounds are producing audiovisual materials for exchange on the Internet. Interviews with workshop participants and facilitators are investigating the effects that opportunities for transnational communications have on the participants’ senses of identity and belonging, both national and transnational. The findings have implications for promoting positive settlement for refugee youth in Australia and elsewhere.

SettleMEN project: A longitudinal study of health and settlement among men with a refugee background living in Brisbane and Toowoomba
(Funded by the NHMRC – Project Grant)

The SettleMEN project is a collaboration between LaRRC and the Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT). The project investigates the bio-psycho-social determinants of health and wellbeing and the settlement experiences of recently arrived adult men with a refugee background. The project began in June 2008 when the first of four interviews to take place over two years were conducted with 233 participants born in Africa, Southeast Asia and the Middle East. This cohort of men have been followed-up using a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. Many of the project’s research assistants are men with a refugee background, placing them in a good position to build rapport with participants, facilitate follow-up, and act as key disseminators of the project findings in their own communities.

In 2009 follow-up interviews were conducted, community forums were held and participant newsletters, policy broadsheets and a publication were produced. SettleMEN will be concluded in 2010, with the last phase of interviews due to be conducted in May and a final report to be released in early 2011.
Evaluation of the NEXUS Suicide Prevention Program (2009–2011) – Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT)  
(Funded by the National Suicide Prevention Strategy – NSPS)

The NEXUS program is part of the National Suicide Prevention Strategy. The program aims at promoting wellbeing, building resilience, and reducing risk factors for suicide and self-harm among young people from refugee backgrounds aged 12–24 living in Brisbane and Toowoomba (Queensland). NEXUS activities seek to enhance three of the major preventative factors against suicide and self-harm: connectedness to people and place, locus of control and perceived academic performance.

LaRRC’s Brisbane based team successfully conducted the evaluation of the 2007–2009 NEXUS program. QPASTT has received two more years of funding for NEXUS. The 2009–2011 stage of the program is also being evaluated by LaRRC. The evaluation uses a mixed-method longitudinal approach to assess the impact and performance of the program, inform its future focus and direction, and enhance its effectiveness. The evaluation will seek to address both the impact of the program on participants and communities, but also organisational and environmental factors that influence the management of the program.

The Impact on the Human Rights of Asylum-Seekers and Host Communities of Australia’s Border Control Cooperation with Indonesia and PNG  
(Funded by ARC Linkage, Oxfam Australia, Jesuit Refugee Service Australia and La Trobe University Faculty of Law and Management 2007–2009).

This project is being carried out by Dr Savitri Taylor, La Trobe University School of Law, in partnership with LaRRC and is an innovative academic and community sector collaboration investigating whether Australia can more effectively safeguard the human rights of asylum-seekers and others affected by its regional border control cooperation. The first phase of the project has been completed and findings documented in the form of confidential reports written by the investigators for Oxfam Australia and Jesuit Refugee Service Australia (the Partner Organisations). The second phase of the project (fieldwork in Indonesia and PNG) is presently underway. At the completion of the project, a final report will be written by the investigators to be used by the Partner Organisations as the basis for advocacy and to inform their programmatic work in Indonesia and PNG.

"I like living in Australia, because I haven’t experienced anything else. Cos’ I was here practically my whole life and I have no other memories so it suits me right."
This study aims to explore the experience of long-term immigration detention and its consequences for the psychosocial wellbeing of adult refugees. Seventeen men and women who were previously held in detention for two years or more were interviewed about their experiences in detention, their life settling in the community after release and their current wellbeing. The study found former long-term detainees were struggling to rebuild their lives over the years following release from immigration detention, and for the majority the difficulties experienced were pervasive. Participants suffered ongoing insecurity and injustice, difficulties with relationships, profound changes to views of self and poor mental health. Depression and demoralisation, concentration and memory disturbances, and persistent anxiety were very commonly reported.
Family separation and the impacts on the settlement of people from refugee backgrounds

(Funded by La Trobe University, Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture – Foundation House, Myer Foundation, William Buckland Foundation)

This study focuses on the impacts of family separation on the settlement and wellbeing of refugee communities in Victoria. This project is a joint initiative between LaRRC and the Victorian Foundation for the Survivors of Torture.

FEATURES

THE LA TROBE REFUGEE RESEARCH CENTRE AT LA TROBE UNIVERSITY IS CONDUCTING A STUDY THAT WILL DOCUMENT, ANALYSE AND REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF HOME LANDS, AN INNOVATIVE MULTIMEDIA PROJECT BEING CONDUCTED BY THE CITY OF MELBOURNE, CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK, CENTRE FOR MULTICULTURAL YOUTH AND THE ASSOCIATION FOR PROGRESSIVE COMMUNICATIONS (AUSTRALIA) WHICH USES COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES TO CONNECT YOUNG KAREN AND SUDANESE PEOPLE IN MELBOURNE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED REFUGEE STATUS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE IN THEIR HOMELANDS AND OTHER DIASPORA COMMUNITIES. THE PARTICIPANTS IN AUSTRALIA AND OVERSEAS CREATE DIGITAL PRODUCTIONS WITH ENTRY-LEVEL DIGITAL TOOLS AND COMMUNICATE REGULARLY VIA A COLLABORATIVELY PRODUCED WEBSITE.
The study being undertaken by LaRRC is exploring questions surrounding the impact of Information Communication Technologies on the resettlement, identities and communication strategies of young people from diverse backgrounds. The study seeks to identify how young people from refugee backgrounds are affected by their involvement in Home Lands (for example, in terms of their experiences of settlement, sense of identity, belonging and social inclusion) and how organisations aim to innovatively support the resettlement of young people from refugee backgrounds (for example, in terms of assumptions, programs, goals, strategies.)

This study is part of the larger Home Lands project, initiated by the City of Melbourne and the Cultural Development Network, which aims to address the following questions:

- How can settlement strategies be developed that best capture the potential benefits of the transnational, global identities and practices of displaced youth?
- In what ways and to what extent can the ‘refugee’ label be replaced by other, more positive identities, for example, as members of transnational and mediated communities?
- How can organisations in diverse settlement and refugee contexts contribute to supporting positive identity-formation processes by providing access to media production and information and communication technologies (ICTs)?

The Home Lands project grew out of the recognition of emerging issues associated with the resettlement of young refugees in Melbourne, in particular issues of alienation and marginalisation. The City of Melbourne and the Cultural Development Network, in association with The Centre for Multicultural Youth, recognizes that the growth in access to phone-cards, mobile phones and the Internet over the past 10 years has played an important role for some young refugees, and that communicating with home has a positive and stabilising influence. With an ongoing commitment to supporting refugee intakes in Australia it is important to determine whether a greater level of communication across more communities might provide a more stable resettlement environment. A key question for service providers and local government organisations is ‘what role can provision of access to ICTs play in the development of community services?’

Home Lands is now in a position to address this significant problem for Australia and the world: how to ensure that the opportunities presented by the development of new ICTs are translated into positive settlement and identity experiences for displaced youth, who are amongst the most vulnerable and disempowered populations in the world.

As young people growing up in contexts of displacement, refugee youth have developed firsthand experience of globalised identities. Indeed – in part as a result of their experiences of displacement – they have become global and transnational, delimiting their social networks and imaginations from one single place, encouraging them to actively sustain meaningful relations, networks, and connections across geographical, cultural and political borders. In this respect, refugee youth could be interpreted as representatives of a new world order – and potentially a very positive one – in which identities are increasingly mediated and deterritorialised, and communities are constructed through processes of mobility, media representations and networking rather than through place-based initiatives alone.

However, it is not this potentially empowered identity that is usually attributed to youth who have experienced forced displacement; rather, many young refugees struggle to develop positive cultural identities as they remain trapped by the refugee label and associated perceptions of disempowerment and disenfranchised communities. The Home Lands project, underpinned by the premise that young people from refugee backgrounds will more
successfully resettle in Australia if identification, communication and engagement is maintained with home communities, aims to utilise ICTs innovatively to build upon the array of skills refugee youth attain as a direct result of their unique experiences of forced displacement – including the development of language, social and cultural skills in multiple locations and vast transnational networks.

Research demonstrates that, as a result of new ICTs and better, cheaper access to ICTs, many migrants can now more easily communicate with people in their homelands on a regular basis and thereby sustain important transnational networks of support. However, usually due to lack of infrastructure in their homelands and places of transit, and the uncertainties and dispersal associated with their displacement, many refugees are not in a position to make use of these opportunities. Such research has encouraged this project to pursue ICTs and media production opportunities as an avenue for capitalising on the existing skills and experiences of displaced youth, providing them with new points of connection to their local and transnational communities.

The Home Lands project uses communication technologies to connect young Karen and Sudanese people in Melbourne who have experienced refugee status with young people in their homelands and other diaspora communities. The participants in Australia and overseas will create digital productions with entry-level digital tools and communicate regularly via a collaboratively produced website. The concurrent study will investigate the role communication technologies can play in connecting young refugees to their diasporic communities and whether this assists them in developing positive social and cultural identities.

This project will be achieved through a series of workshops, run by Community Cultural Workers and Media Specialists, providing training for teams of young Karen and Sudanese participants based in Australia and for their respective compatriots in either refugee camps or re-settled communities overseas. The project will link the teams and they will work collaboratively by suggesting themes and assignments to each other and viewing and commenting on each other’s work. It is hoped that most dialogue will occur via the web. These workshops began in January 2010 for the Karen young people based in Melbourne, with group training sessions for their counterparts, who are based in Mae Sot on the Thai/Burma border, due to begin in February. Workshops with Melbourne and Kenyan based Sudanese young people have been planned to commence in June.

Interviews with workshop participants and facilitators will further investigate the effects that opportunities for transnational communications have on the participants’ sense of identity and belonging, both national and transnational.
Planned public events will also take place throughout the duration of the project and will feature the collaborative work being created by participants across international borders.

Home Lands will contribute to our knowledge and understanding of settlement issues affecting refugee young people and their communities. While reinforcing the importance of cultural identity among refugee young people, this project simultaneously illustrates how local government community services, cultural programs and arts strategies can assist refugees with successful resettlement. It is hoped that this international collaboration, and findings from the associated study, will lead to the development of a responsive, reproducible program that can be implemented internationally to promote positive resettlement for refugee youth in Australia and around the world.

For further information visit:
www.latrobe.edu.au/larrc
or http://www.culturaldevelopment.net.au/homelands

SettleMEN: A longitudinal study of health and settlement among men with refugee backgrounds living in Brisbane and Toowoomba

*Funded by the NHMRC – Project Grant*


One third of all refugee and humanitarian entrants to Australia over the past ten years have been adult men. To date, little research has been done about their health needs and settlement experiences. The SettleMEN project aims at identifying ways in which recently arrived men from refugee backgrounds can be best assisted in order to ensure their good health, successful settlement and full development as active members of the Australian community.

The SettleMEN project is a two-year longitudinal descriptive study that uses a peer interviewer model and a combination of quantitative and qualitative
research methods. Since June 2008, 233 participants born in Africa, Southeast Asia and the Middle East have been interviewed and will be followed-up for two years, at six-month intervals.

The peer interviewer model has been very effective, as the project’s research assistants share similar historical and socio-cultural backgrounds with the participants, and therefore are in a good position to build rapport with participants, disseminate the project findings in their own communities, and validate the communities’ ownership of the project.

A number of outcomes were produced in 2009, including:
- Participants’ newsletter: A newsletter was distributed to all participants, informing them about how the project was progressing.
- Community forums: Two community forums were held, one in Brisbane and the other in Toowoomba. The forums provided a community platform for the discussion, updates and feedback of the preliminary findings of the project.
- Policy broadsheets: Two broadsheets on employment and educational outcomes among men from refugee backgrounds were produced and distributed widely among stakeholders.
- Conferences: Preliminary analyses of education, employment and health outcomes were also presented at three annual conferences across Australia.
- Publication: An academic paper reporting on the educational and occupational findings of the African participants (n=173) has been published in the Australasian Review of African Studies journal (30(2): 114–127).

The SettleMEN project is coming to a close in late 2010. The last phase of the quantitative questionnaires will be completed in May 2010. In-depth qualitative interviews will be conducted with a subsample of participants to obtain a greater understanding of the key issues identified in the quantitative surveys. Two community forums will be held, and additional policy broadsheets and research papers will be published. The final project report will be produced in early 2011.

OBITUARY
Tragically Stephen Yanga lost his life at the Gold Coast early in 2010. He was an active community volunteer who devoted much of his time to helping others. It was this commitment that introduced Stephen to LaRRC where for the last two years he worked as a Research Assistant on the SettleMEN project, investigating the health and wellbeing of men from refugee backgrounds living in Australia.

Stephen’s team of co-workers on this project and everyone at the Centre will remember his quiet nature and determination to assist his Sudanese community. Our heart-felt condolences go out to Stephen’s family and his community for this tragic loss. He will be missed.
In 2009 LaRRC worked with a range of academics, community organisations, government departments and research centres on a number of projects:

- Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT)
- The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (Foundation House)
- The Australian Research Centre for Sex, Health and Society (ARCSHS) – La Trobe University
- Dr Savitri Taylor, School of Law – La Trobe University
- Dr Raelene Wilding, Sociology Program – La Trobe University
- Centre for Multicultural Youth
- Footscray Youth Housing
- VicHealth (Victorian Health Promotion Foundation)
- Victorian Department of Human Services
- City of Melbourne
- Cultural Development Network
- Association for Progressive Communications (Australia)
- Mater Health Services (Brisbane)

The Impact on the Human Rights of Asylum-Seekers and Host Communities of Australia’s Border Control Cooperation with Indonesia and PNG

This ARC funded project is a research collaboration between LaRRC and La Trobe University’s School of Law, in conjunction with industry partners Oxfam Australia and the Jesuit Refugee Service of Australia. La Trobe University Project Staff include Dr Savitri Taylor, School of Law, Ms Brynna Rafferty, School of Law, and Professor Sandra Gifford, LaRRC.

Australia and other developed countries regard border control as critical to ensuring state security and citizen welfare. One defensive strategy which Australia, in common with other developed countries, has increasingly adopted is that of attempting to create an ‘offshore’ border for itself, most commonly through the establishment of border control cooperation with regional, and often developing, countries from where irregular migrants originate and/or transit. However, there has been little investigation or analysis of the impact of these activities on the human rights of asylum-seekers or their host communities outside Australia.

Since September 2007, LaRRC, La Trobe University Law School, the Jesuit Refugee Service Australia and Oxfam Australia have been engaged in a research project investigating just this.

In preliminary research conducted prior to the commencement of this project, Dr Taylor identified Australia’s border control cooperation with Indonesia and PNG as particularly meriting further research.
This research project has sought to map Australia’s border control cooperation with, and also refugee protection capacity building in, PNG and Indonesia through three phases that assess the net impact of these activities on asylum-seekers and host communities and identify policy strategies for better protecting the human rights of asylum-seekers and host communities in the course of border control cooperation. In the first phase of the research project, legal and documentary research was conducted into Australian, Indonesian and PNG law, policy and practice. Phase two of the project, which began in 2008 and continued into 2009, involved conducting interviews with asylum-seekers/irregular migrants and key informants in Australia, Indonesia, PNG and elsewhere. The research challenges presented during this second phase were many. While asylum seekers and the organisations that support them have willingly shared their experiences and insights, government officials in Australia, PNG and Indonesia have been more reluctant to provide information about what they see as politically sensitive matters. Researchers also encountered many layers of bureaucracy standing between them and the answers they sought. While phase two continued late into 2009, phase three of the project, data analysis, was beginning and the completion of this phase is expected by June 2010.

This project aims to advance knowledge by investigating whether Australia can more effectively safeguard the human rights of asylum-seekers, and host communities, affected by its regional border control cooperation.

The results of this study will enhance the capacity of policy makers to deal with mixed flows of irregular migrants and asylum-seekers consistently with human rights and thus Australia’s ability to play a positive leadership role in its region.

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**Research Collaboration in Focus**

*Boat arrivals being transported to Christmas Island – April, 2009. Photo by Michelle Dimasi.*

(The former as almost 85 percent of all irregular migrants to Australia either transited or originated in Indonesia. The latter due to its geographical location between Australia and Indonesia, and the subsequent potential for PNG as a transit country for asylum seekers.)

**Research Grants Received in 2009**

**Gifford, S.M. and Wilding, R.**
Home Lands: Displaced youth and the development of positive transnational identities in a supportive local context.
ARC: $84,679
City of Melbourne: $49,500
Cultural Development Network: $2,000

**Correa-Velez, I.**
SettleMEN project: A longitudinal study of health and settlement among men with a refugee background living in Brisbane and Toowoomba
NHMRC: $169,559

**Sampson, R.** (PhD research bursary)
Alternatives to immigration detention
International Detention Coalition: $9,500

**Gifford, S.M.**
Family reunion and settlement
Foundation House (VFST): $67,362
Does war induced displacement end with the end of war? My most recent field work in Sri Lanka suggests that not all internally displaced people (IDP) affected by the country's long running civil war will return to their homes now that the war has ended.

Civil war has raged in Sri Lanka’s North-East for more than three decades, ending in May 2009 when Tamil rebel fighters were defeated by Sri Lankan government forces. The human cost of the war is immense – almost 100,000 people have been killed and over 600,000 people have been internally displaced. A large number of those displaced by the conflict have lived for almost two decades in state administered welfare centres and refugee camps supported by the UN and other international agencies. In 2009, following the end to the civil war the Sri Lankan government announced an ambitious program to return all IDPs in camps and government welfare centres to their home lands. With little other than a cash incentive and a supply of basic goods, people are being encouraged to return back to homes and farm land that they have not visited in almost twenty years. Many of these long-term displaced people believe that this is unfair because property has been taken over by others, has irreparable damage and they find it difficult to leave all that they gained in the areas that they have been living in as displaced people.

My most recent fieldwork in late 2009 has focused on a group of displaced people who have spent eighteen years in camps and welfare centres in a place called Puttalam, a border district in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka. I have been investigating their reactions to the Sri Lankan government’s post-conflict resettlement programme, announced in mid-2009. The findings of my research suggest that successful resettlement planning of displaced people requires a greater understanding of how IDPs make decisions, based on their lived experiences and expectations.

The Civil War
The Sri Lankan civil war began in the 1980s when Tamil youth from the northern regions sought solutions from the Sinhalese (Buddhist) dominated national government for long neglected grievances within their community through armed struggle. Of the rebel groups to emerge, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), more commonly known as the Tamil Tigers, proved the strongest. Led by a charismatic militant leader named Prabakaran, LTTE’s main aim was to establish a separate state called “Tamil Eelam” in the North East part of the country, which they believe to have been the “home land” of the Tamils for centuries.

As conflict between LTTE and the national government forces raged over three decades external parties negotiated a number of peace proposals, but due to unwillingness for a genuine political solution from both parties negotiations failed. In 2006, following the election of a pro-Buddhist leader as President, a full scale military action began against the LTTE. Despite many requests from the international community to end military action and find a political solution to the Tamil issues, the government continued its offensive against the LTTE, with the support of India, among other countries. The final battle between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan Government forces lasted nearly two years, ending with killing of the LTTE leader and top militants in May 2009.

Victims of the War: Internally Displaced People
The North-Eastern region of Sri Lanka is home to people from all ethnic communities – Tamil, Sinhala and Tamil Muslim – and it is the people of
this region who have suffered most due to the war. As a result of armed confrontations between Tamil rebels and the government security forces hundreds of people living in the North East were forced to flee their homes and seek refuge in foreign countries or other safe places outside the war affected North East part of the country. Other people were forced to leave their homes due to the establishment of military camps and zones, by government forces in the region, which prohibit civilians (high security zones). Most recent estimates (2009) show that nearly 750,000 people have been displaced by the war.

Of the displaced peoples Tamils form the majority (UNCHR) and it has been argued by some that the forced displacement of Tamil speaking Muslims from the Northern Province was not merely a by-product of the war, but an intentional act carried out against this minority group. While a majority of Muslims speak Tamil, they are a not a part of the conflict, which is mainly between Tamil Hindus and the Sinhalese Buddhist government. However, the LTTE evicted nearly 15,000 Muslim families living in five districts of the Tamil dominated Northern Province in 1990. The eviction of Tamil speaking Muslims by the Tamil rebels has been described by several elderly displaced community leaders as a politically motivated act of “ethnic cleansing”.

Today more than 70 percent of the evicted Northern Muslims live in the camps and welfare centres in Puttalam.

Many of those forcibly displaced by the fighting in the North Eastern regions have lived in camps and centres for more than eighteen years. During this time they have worked hard to rebuild their lost assets and lives, with the hope of a bright future for their children. Most of the displaced Muslims have actively engaged in framing (carpentry) and fishing activities, as well as trade and other businesses, and some have bought small pieces of land and built houses, either on their own or with the assistance of non-profit organizations.

However it is the second generation of displaced Muslims who have adapted best to the local conditions; many have obtained a good education and have job prospects in Puttalam. Since the end of the war it is many of these displaced Muslims who have found it difficult to make a decision on whether to return home to the North or stay where they are currently living in Puttalam. One factor affecting their decision has been their economic successes among this displaced population; while the establishment of businesses and increased involvement in the local workforce has been of direct benefit to them and their families it has also been seen as negatively impacting upon the local “host” community’s resources, resulting in increasing pressure from the government for these displaced Muslims to return to their home places.

Views of Displaced people of their intention of returning home in the North

The impacts of long-term displacement differ from short-term or temporary displacement. One major issue unique to long-term displacement that has become evident in my research among the displaced Muslims who have lived in Puttalam for almost twenty years is the mixed feelings among the community regarding returning to their home places.

The decision to return or to remain is affected by a great many factors and no particular view appears to be linked to distinct sections of the community. The desire to remain in the place of settlement is
clearly stronger among those who were able to overcome economic hardships, however the many challenges faced by the people in the refugee camps and welfares centres as “displaced” people and “aliens of their homelands”, and the continuing struggle to live off the aid and assistance provided by the government, also provides a strong incentive to return.

The most delighted and hopeful about returning home after the war are the first generation of displaced men, who are now elderly and dependent upon their children. They have a strong desire to return to their native places, which they will welcome with relief and view as a spiritual journey towards their past memories.

“In this place (Puttalam) everything is new. We have no connection to this place. We don’t see our life getting any better here. I want to bury my body in my home village when I die... I pray everyday that my body and soul to be rested in my home village, near to the place where my parents and grandparents were buried.”

- 64 year old, male, IDP

In fact, many of the displaced women and youth seem more pragmatic in their views, with a tendency to prefer remaining in Puttalam. Many displaced women have proved the catalyst for rebuilding lost livelihoods in the displaced localities. While many males struggled to earn an income, many of the women took work as wage labourers or moved to Arab countries to work as housemaids, many also fostered local community activities to support their families during difficult times. Economic security is another strong factor informing the position to remain.

“We had difficult time at the beginning. Sometime we had only one meal a day at that time. We (women) had to work whole day in onion farms to get some money. But now we feel much relieve and many of us able to purchase lands and some even built houses of their own. We can’t just leave all we earned here for the last eighteen years and go back to our original places. Our children like this place. This is our second home”.

- 46 year old, female, IDP

The second generation of IDPs, many of whom were born or spent much of their childhood in the camps and welfare centres of Puttalam, also indicate a preference to remain in their current locality. While Puttalam represents the familiar it also represents a more secure future, going back to their parents’ native homes in the North represents uncertainty and ambiguity. Young people have expressed a belief that returning home to the Northern Province is a backward step, that there are no greener pastures in their native places, despite the picture the government and some of their political leaders have attempted to portray.

“I was two year-old child when I left our home (Jaffna) in 1990. I can’t recall anything. I went back to Jaffna in 2005 by bus. I was happy to see my parents’ birth place. I got used to a different lifestyle, and very difficult to go back to Jaffna and live there. I have almost settled down here, will not go back to Jaffna to live.”

- 19 year old, male, IDP

While there is a recognition among younger members of the community of the strong cultural importance of returning to their home places, the economic and physical security established after years of settlement in Puttalam, and the positive impact this will have on the younger generation’s futures, strongly informs the position of those who prefer to remain.

“I have three children, who were born in Puttalam. They do not know anything about the ancestral house. I wanted to take them to Mannar (home place) to show the culture I followed. These children will grow up without knowing the values of our culture and tradition. And on the other hand I do not want to take any risk, and go and settle in Mannar (original home place), because of their education”

- 32 year old, female, IDP (school teacher)
“This is our home (Puttalam). For me going to my parents’ place going to be a nightmare. We went back to see our old place when there was a ceasefire. There are land mines there. There are people without arms and legs because of mines. How we can walk or play with freedom.” - 16 year old, male, IDP (student)

Physical security has also been raised by members of the community as a reason to remain. This view has been expressed most by the leaders of displaced people who want government help in tracing back properties to original owners because many people were unable to take their documents with them when they fled the area.

“We are happy that LTTE is now defeated. This gives us hope that we can go back. But we can go only if the government helps us. Some of our farmlands are like jungles, we may not able to find our ancestral houses. The most important is that we want assurances about our safety.” - 54 years old, male (Political Leader of Displaced Muslims)

My research also reveals that not all of those among the younger generation feel that they should remain in Puttalam. Some young people say that they are discriminated against and continue to face many difficulties living in the host community due to their status as a displaced person. Therefore, returning to their parent’s home places is seen by such people as a better option.

“We have no rights here. If we go to our own places we can get rights. We will have freedom to study in our own schools find work. Here (Puttalam) host community teachers support only host community students, they are afraid of us getting rights and equal opportunities if we settled here.” - 21 year old, male, IDP

Despite the differing views among the displaced Muslims living in Puttalam, as a result of government pressure the most likely outcome for many of these people will be to maintain “dual residency” — one in the current locality of Puttalam and another in their native home places in the Northern part of the country. A young woman who is currently studying for her undergraduate degree in a local university made this very clear:

“Our family go back only if other families go back. Even such a situation there will be two villages, one here and one there. For generations there will these two.” - 21 year old, female, IDP (university student)

As revealed by the findings of my research included in this report, the decision to remain or to return depends on numerous social, political and structural factors. The disinclination to return, even under the best of conditions that State sponsored resettlement programs offer, is an important dimension to be further investigated with a particular focus on the impact of a protracted period of displacement. My research shows that those who are most likely to remain in the displaced localities are drawn from highly disparate groups, including; those who are fully or partially integrated with the host societies; have found employment opportunities; did not have land/property in the areas they fled from; have bought land/property after their displacement; have younger family who have settled into “a modern” life; or, those who are traumatised as victims of “ethnic cleansing” practices.

What may be concluded, and remains true at least for the immediate future, is that the Muslims of Northern Province displaced during Sri Lanka’s civil war will continue to migrate between their newly built second home in Puttalam and their traditional home back in the native villages of Northern Sri Lanka. Such internal migration between the two “homes” of this community and its dynamics needs to be taken into consideration when planning successful resettlement of long-term displaced people affected by the civil war.

Razaak is currently writing his PhD thesis entitled ‘Displacement and identity in Sri Lanka’
**Journal Articles**


**Research papers**


**Reports**


**Audio Visual Materials**

*4us: Young people with refugee backgrounds living in Australia, 2009 [DVD]* Melbourne, VIC: La Trobe Refugee Research Centre, La Trobe University.

**Submissions**

Book Chapters

Publications forthcoming and under review
Brolan, C. and Correa-Velez, I. (under review) ‘Australia’s refugee resettlement program may have breadth, but from a health care perspective does it lack depth?’ Journal of International Migration and Integration.


"Like I wake up every day to see that you know I’m not in my own country, but I’m in somewhere different you know, a place where there’s many different type of people. It depends on how long you’ve lived here. Me, I’ve lived here like for quite a while and I feel like this is home, you know. I am like sort of Australian. Or I wanna be seen as Australian."
June
McDonald-Wilmsen, B. ‘Refugee resettlement in regional and rural Victoria’ (with Sue Casey from The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture Inc.) La Trobe Settlement Planning Committee, La Trobe University, Melbourne VIC.

Omar, Y. S. ‘Integration experiences and youth perspectives: An exploratory study between school-going Somali youth in Melbourne, Australia, and Minneapolis, USA. Forced migration and shifting borders – Canadian Association for Refugee and Forced Migration Studies 2nd Annual Conference, University of Ottawa, Canada.

July


Omar, Y.S. ‘Experiences of employment and social integration among young Somali men living in Minneapolis, USA and Melbourne, Australia’. LASFM12, University of Nicosia, Cyprus.

September
Correa-Velez, I. and Onsando, G. ‘SettleMEN: Health status and use of health services among recently arrived adult men from refugee backgrounds’. 1st Australasian Refugee Health Conference, Themhs, Perth WA.

McMichael, C. ‘Promoting sexual health amongst young people with refugee backgrounds’. Public Health Association Conference, Canberra ACT.


October


McDonald-Wilmsen, B. ‘Reconfiguring refugee families: The psychosocial impacts of family separation and the implications for settlement’. GP Refugee Health Forum, Melbourne VIC.

December
McMichael, C. ‘Climate change, displacement and health’. Australian Sociological Association Conference 2009 – Health Day, Canberra ACT.
February
Correa-Velez, I. ‘Supporting resettlement among youth from refugee backgrounds: The school context’. Brisbane Catholic Education Seminar, Brisbane QLD.

March
Correa-Velez, I. ‘Good Starts for recently arrived youth from refugee backgrounds: Health and wellbeing in the first three years in Melbourne’. Child and Youth Mental Health Services – CYMHS Mini-Conference, Royal Children’s Hospital, Brisbane QLD.

Correa-Velez, I. ‘Good Starts for recently arrived youth from refugee backgrounds: Health and wellbeing in the first three years in Melbourne’. Mater Child and Youth Mental Health Services – CYMHS Grand Rounds, Mater Hospital, Brisbane QLD.

Correa-Velez, I. ‘Refugee health care: Myths’. Refugee Health Symposium for Medical Students, University of Queensland, Brisbane QLD.

McMichael, C. ‘Medical Anthropology’. Applied Anthropology, School of Social Sciences, La Trobe University, Melbourne VIC.

April
Correa-Velez, I. ‘Seeking asylum in Australia: Bad for your health? Towards International Medical Equality – TIME Seminar, University of Queensland, Brisbane QLD.

May
Correa-Velez, I. ‘Displacement, resettlement and health: A family story. Displacement, flight and refugee’. Anthropology (second/third year unit), School of Social Sciences, La Trobe University, Melbourne VIC.

July
Gifford, S.M. (Invited keynote address) ‘Wellbeing and settlement among youth with refugee backgrounds in Australia’. International Association for Human Development: Asia Pacific Workshop on Migration, Flinders University, Adelaide SA.

August
Sampson, R. ‘The health of refugees and asylum seekers in Australia’. Invited guest lecture, Psychosocial Perspectives on Health and Illness (third year unit), School of Public Health, La Trobe University, Melbourne VIC.

September
Sampson, R. ‘Impacting the lives of refugees and asylum seekers through public health’. Invited guest lecture Professional Practice (first year unit), School of Public Health, La Trobe University, Melbourne VIC.

November
Correa-Velez, I. ‘Good Starts for recently arrived youth with refugee backgrounds: Promoting successful transitions during early settlement’. Young Refugee Mental Health Interagency Network – Bi-annual Forum, Yeronga State High School, Brisbane QLD.

"While they (community elders) thinking that we are kinda moving away from our culture, we think we are mixing the Australian culture with the Somali culture"
LaRRC POSTGRADUATE SEMINAR SERIES

August
Mr Jay Marlowe – School of Social Work, Flinders University. ‘Research with Sudanese refugees’

September
Dr Celia McMichael – LaRRC, La Trobe University and Dr Sue Chaplin – Institute for Human Security/LaRRC, La Trobe University. ‘Climate change and displacement/adaptation’

October
Mr Damir Mitric – School of Historical and European Studies, La Trobe University. ‘Bosnian Refugees in Germany: Temporary Protection’

November
Mr Luis Fernando Eslava Arcila – School of Law, The University of Melbourne. ‘Urban informal settings: IDPs and urban resettlement in Colombia’

LaRRC EVENTS

June
Good Starts Arts DVD Release: Public Screening at ACMI
‘4us: Young people with refugee backgrounds living in Australia’ is a series of four short documentaries that provide a glimpse into the world of young people from refugee backgrounds as they explore their experiences of resettlement in Australia through audio-visual media.

October
Somali Youth Conference: Community Event held at La Trobe University
‘The Best of Both Worlds: A One Day Youth Conference on Somali Australian Education and Identity’

November
Forced Migration Research Seminar: Open Seminar held at La Trobe University
Professor Stephen Castles – University of Sydney, who spoke about his current research on Social Transformation and International Migration.
Committee Membership (External)
Correa-Velez, I.
- Refugee Health Queensland – Member of the State-wide Advisory Committee, Queensland Health and Mater Hospital, Brisbane.
- Refugees and Primary Health Project (RaPH) – Member of the Project Management Group, Mater/UQ Centre for Primary Health Care Innovation, Brisbane.
- Refugees and Primary Health Project (RaPH) – Member of the Project Evaluation Group, Mater/UQ Centre for Primary Health Care Innovation, Brisbane.
- Refugee Maternity Service, Mater Mother’s Hospital. Member of the Evaluation Committee, Brisbane.
- Interpreting and Cultural Responsiveness Project, Member of the Steering Committee, Mater Health Services, Brisbane.
- AMPARO Advocacy Inc – Advocating for people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities who have a disability. Member of the Management Committee, Brisbane.

McMichael, C.
- The Climate Institute

Assessors/Reviewers
Correa-Velez, I.
- Research grant applications: Australian Research Council.

McMichael, C

Gifford, S.M.
- Research grant applications: Australian Research Council, National Health and Medical Research Council.

Membership on Editorial Boards
Gifford, S.M.
- Editorial Board: Journal of Migration and Social Care
- Corresponding editor: Medical Anthropology Quarterly

"They see a person with a scarf, or they see a man with um a beard, they associate it with terrorism. Just cos I wear a scarf, it doesn’t mean I’m a terrorist. Just cos I’m a Muslim, doesn’t mean that I’m a terrorist."
Doctoral students

Ongoing in 2009
Mohamed Razaak Mohamed Ghani
‘Displacement and identity in Sri Lanka’

Yusuf Shiek Omar
‘Integration experiences based on youth perspectives: A comparative study of Somali youth in Melbourne, Australia and Minneapolis, USA’

Aude Plontz
‘Methodological issues in the “Good Starts” study of Refugee Youth’

Commenced in 2009
Robyn Sampson
‘Immigration detention and community-based alternatives: International models’

Completed in 2009
Tulsi Bisht
‘Displacement, resettlement and wellbeing: An ethnographic study of people displaced by Tehri Dam in India’

Meredith Levi
‘Mothering, trauma and transition: The experiences of Sudanese refugee women raising teenagers in Australia’

New Doctoral Students Commencing in 2010
Rebecca Clark
Mimmie Ngumchi
Zoe Robertson
Anthony Rodriguez-Jimenez
Maheen Sabreena Karim
John Sawtell

Honours students

Rebecca Clarke
Sociology Program, School of Social Sciences, La Trobe University
‘Understanding Development: Learning from a study tour to Bangladesh’

Sandra Tesselaar
Politics Program, School of Social Sciences, La Trobe University
‘Global health governance and the challenge of implementing a malaria vaccine’

Student Placements

Saharla Hassan
BIR, third year – Professional competence: transition to the workplace
Politics Program, School of Social Sciences, La Trobe University
Coordinator, Somalia Youth Conference – ‘The best of both worlds: Celebrating Somali youth’

Teaching

Globalisation to localisation: Rethinking the dilemmas of displacement, flight and resettlement
Fourth year honours elective – School of Social Sciences, La Trobe University.

This unit explores the different perspectives that inform push factors underlying displacement; the contexts and experiences of flight; the search for a new ‘place’; and the dilemmas relating to resettlement. It examines, at a global level, the ways in which the international community – including the UNHCR – addresses displacement, the issues involved in repatriation, local integration and resettlement, and the role of Australia in relation to issues of asylum and resettlement.
LaRRC EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES (continued)

Displacement, Flight and Refuge
Second and third year unit – School of Social Sciences, La Trobe University.

This unit examines the socio-cultural contexts and factors underlying forced displacement, flight, asylum and resettlement from an anthropological perspective. One of the most pressing challenges to global and local wellbeing is the scale and complexity of the problem of refugees and other displaced peoples. This unit critically explores different perspectives about push factors underlying displacement, the contexts and experiences of flight, the search for a new place and the dilemmas of resettlement.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS RECEIVED IN 2009

Fellowships
Ignacio Correa-Velez
NHMRC Public Health Post Doctoral Fellowship
‘Talking the walk and walking the talk: A descriptive follow-up study of refugee men’s health, wellbeing and resettlement’

Scholarships
Mohamed Razaak Mohamed Ghani
World Bank Scholarship
‘Displacement and Identity in Sri Lanka’. This research examines the impact of conflict and internal displacement on identity among Muslim communities in Sri Lanka.

Meredith Levi
Australian Postgraduate Award
‘Mothering, trauma and transition: The experiences of Sudanese refugee women raising teenagers in Australia’. This research project is using a qualitative methodology to explore the experiences of Sudanese refugee mothers in raising their teenage children in Melbourne, Australia. The project aims to investigate the challenges of mothering for women who have previously survived in a collectivist social world, and when they come to Australia, are under pressure to adapt to a strongly individualistic culture.

Yusuf Sheik Omar
PhD scholarship awarded through the ARC (linkage project grant)
‘Good Starts Arts: Visual anthropology of settlement among newly arrived refugee youth’. The focus will be the use of visual anthropology methods within an action research framework to document the experiences of settlement among recently arrived refugee young people.

Aude Plontz
NHMRC Public Health PhD Scholarship and PhD Scholarship awarded by Foundation House
‘Good Starts for Refugee Youth: An ethnographic longitudinal study of the determinants of wellbeing and settlement’. The project proposed here is nested within the Good Starts study and focuses on the methodological issues encountered during the Good Starts study.

Robyn Sampson
La Trobe University Postgraduate Scholarship
‘Immigration detention and community-based alternatives: International models’. This research project is being undertaken in partnership with the International Detention Coalition and aims to identify international community based alternatives to immigration detention.
2009 Somali Youth Conference: ‘The Best of the Both Worlds’ – Celebrating Somali Youth

Saharla Hassan, Conference Organiser/LaRRC student placement, is a Bachelor of International Relations student at La Trobe University.

The La Trobe Refugee Research Centre (LaRRC) in partnership with the Victorian Young Somali Network (VSYN) and the Somali Australian Friendship Association (SAFA) organised and facilitated a Somali youth Conference on 24th October 2009 at La Trobe University, Bundoora. This conference was the first large-scale conference targeting Somali youth that was also independently led by young Somalis, with the aid of LaRRC. Providing a forum for exploring feasible solutions to issues related to Somali youth in Australia, the one day community conference focused directly on the voices and experiences of Somali Australian young people.

Approximately 200 people attended the conference, including Somali youth and parents as well as community service providers. With an emphasis on practical exchange and informal discussion the conference program presented individual speakers and a series of panel sessions, both involving discussion and questions from the audience.

Why a conference focused on Somali youth and their experiences in Australia?

Decades of civil war in Somalia have resulted in millions of Somalis being forced to seek refuge and asylum all over the world. Somalis have become one of the world’s largest diasporic African and Muslim communities, which has resulted in a fragmenting of Somali society.

In Australia, Somalis are one of the largest more recently arrived communities with refugee backgrounds and young people make up more than 50 percent of this community in Melbourne. Traditionally, Somalis share a similar culture, language and religion that unite them through a sense of common identity. However, with old rivalries among warring clans transported across borders and displaced communities slowly being transformed through their interactions with the different cultures of host communities, displaced Somalis living in countries such as Australia often find themselves caught between two cultures, that of their home lands and that of their host community. This tension creates angst and confusion, particularly among the many young people born outside of Somalia or forced to flee when they were quite young, due to their dislocated sense of identity with their homeland. The challenges for young people as they approach adulthood and attempt to achieve their dreams and build their futures in Australia and in the wider world were recognised by this conference, which aimed to explore the different issues within the Somali community regarding identity and youth, in order to better understand the situation facing young Somali Australians today and to find recommendations and solutions to the challenges they face.

Outcomes

Overall the conference proved a success in its aim to provide a forum for Somali youth to voice their concerns and share their experiences of living in Melbourne. The opening panel discussion, focusing on different perspectives of education held by young and old Somalis Australians, identified barriers to communication between parents and children, including language, educational awareness and expectations, and recommendations for these issues were discussed.

The second session focused on the educational experiences of three young Somali Australians. The following panel discussion resulted in a number
SAFA and VYSN are planning another conference/community meeting to further discuss other issues raised at the conference. SAFA is also organising a graduation ceremony, involving both Somalis and Australians, to celebrate and acknowledge achievements in education. VYSN is now also in the planning stages of setting up a weekend school for the youth to learn Somali and stay in touch with the Somali culture.

Please note: All interpretations and conclusions presented in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the Somali community's perspectives on the discussed issues.

Acknowledgements
There were many participants involved in the 2009 Somali Youth Conference that we would like to thank, especially the Somali youth for their involvement and attendance. We also like to thank the Somali Australian Friendship Association and Victorian Young Somali Network for their nonstop involvement in organising this event. Finally, we thank the organisations that funded this conference, including the City of Darebin, AMES, Spectrum MRC, ADEC, La Trobe University Equity and Diversity Centre, Innovation Recruitment Agency, Kids R' Kids Family Day Care Service, and Warsame Fashion.

Conclusion
The conference involved a high level of audience participation that encouraged a community effort to identify and find solutions to challenges facing young Somali Australians involved in education in Melbourne. Somali youth who attended the conference have since described the event as inspiring and informative, with some of the solutions derived from the conference now being implemented in the community.
Revenue for 2009 was: $679,399

The major items were:

**Research Grants**

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**DEST Operating Grant**

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**NHMRC PhD Scholarship**

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**HONORARY ASSOCIATES**

Lew Hess  
Western Region Program Manager, Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture

Dr Ida Kaplan  
Direct Services Manager, Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture

Dr Colleen McFarlane  
Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

QPASTT staff  
Designland

Thank you to our financial supporters:

- VicHealth
- Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture
- International Detention Coalition
- City of Melbourne
- Cultural Development Network
- La Trobe University
- Institute for Human Security
- Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, La Trobe University
- School of Social Sciences, La Trobe University
LaRRC Staff in 2009

Director
Sandy Gifford
BA Hons, UC (Davis); MA, UC (Davis); MPH, UC (Berkeley); PhD, UC (San Francisco)

Deputy Director and NHMRC Postdoctoral Research Fellow
Ignacio Correa-Velez
MBBS, Universidad Javeriana; Family Physician, Universidad del Valle; PhD, University of Queensland

Research Fellows
Brooke McDonald-Wilmsen
BSc/BA Hons, University of Melbourne; PhD, University of Melbourne

Celia McMichael
MA Hons, University of Edinburgh; PhD, University of Melbourne

Sue Chaplin
MA (Development Studies), Monash University; PhD, La Trobe University

Research Officers
Christine Bakopanos
BSc, University of Melbourne; Grad Dip Health Psych, La Trobe University; MA, Swinburne University

Robyn Sampson
BA Hons, University of Melbourne; PhD candidate, La Trobe University

Amber McQueen
BA Hons, La Trobe University

Caitlin Nunn
BA, Victoria College of the Arts; Grad Dip and MA Prelim, La Trobe University; PhD candidate, Australian Centre, University of Melbourne

Gerald Onsando
BEd, Queensland University of Technology; MA (Training and Development), Griffith University

Belinda Devine
BA Hons, La Trobe University

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BSS, University of Queensland

Estelle Purchas
Admin Officer Dip Int. Dec, RMIT University; BSc, La Trobe University

Edmee Kenny
Admin Officer BIR Hons, La Trobe University

Tracy Lee
Financial Officer BIR, La Trobe University

Casual Staff
Sabah Al Ansari, Mach Anyuat, Kiza Augustin, Mark Deng Garang, Suan Muan Thang, Vivien Nsanabo, Wilson Oyat, Baptist Oyet, Zoe Robertson, Stephen Yanga
Dhaqan Celis
by Amran Ali
(presented at the Somali Youth Conference The Best of Both Worlds, October 2009, La Trobe University)

I find it quite embarrassing
Whenever my relatives ring
That the only thing I can say
Is Haa, Ficcan and May
What do I say to my Ayeyo, Awowo and Habo’s too
When the only words in Somali I know
Are a sad and lonely few
I went back to Africa a few months ago
Man, the conversations
They were really slow
Hand gestures and sign language were the order of the day
It was so frustrating, since I had so much to say
“Dhaqan celis baad u baahantahay”
Is what they respond with, whenever I try
The caay, they come up with
Bisinka, it’s enough to make a grown man cry
Don’t get me started on the tea making
“Hooyo, shaah ii soo kari”
Why not? It should be easy
I can tell, my shaah and xawaash makes them queasy
“Aussie run baatahay habo”
I laugh and smile at their good natured teasing
I take the put downs, even though on the inside I’m seething
The elbows in the ribs when I try the buraanbur
I was once even told that I looked like a fool
But, I still eat bananas with my bariis
I still laugh at my mum, when she mixes up her b’s and her p’s
I still don’t think my house is clean without uunsi
I can still remember the macalin, terrorising us at dugsi
I’ve dodged my fair share of dacas
Told to hit back at the caddaan kids at school, my Aabo telling me
“Don’t be a nacas”
Next time they tease me and call me an aussie
When I speak my broken somali
And they roll their eyes and qosol
I’ll tell them I’m Somali
“boqolkiiba boqol”