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“The impact of the Community Guides on the refugee communities in Australia: the literature review of the AMES’s Community Guides Program for newly arrived refugees”

Key words

refugees, resettlement, community guides

Abstract

This paper will explore the Community Guides Program through the literature review published by AMES, and examine the impact of the Community Guides program on the settlement of new arrivals, community guides who assist their seniors, and refugee communities they are belonging.

Whether refugees should be accepted is one of controversial issue in Australia. However, around 14,000 refugees migrants annually, from countries in the African, Middle Eastern, and Asian regions into Australia through resettlement program. The Australian Government funds a range of services to assist the settlement process, and these are recognized as among the best in the world. The Community Guides Program is one of refugee settlement services in Australia. Community guides employed by AMES. It was a Service Agency of the Victorian Government's Department of Education, Employment and Training. After AMES became an autonomous Adult Education Institution by government reform, it began providing English to new settlers.

In 2005 AMES introduced the Community Guides initiative which offer settlement assistance and are from the same cultural background and often share a common language and refugee history. They are ideally placed to offer meaningful support to newly arrived refugees such as an initial orientation to the local area, support in securing accommodation, and access local information and linking them with community groups. Accompanying clients to register with key services such as employment security, health insurance, schools and English Language centres, opening a bank account, health services is major role of Community guides. Community guides also offer emotional and psychological supports for newly arrived refugees. The guides share an understanding of what it is like to be new to Australia and from a refugee background. They can quickly build rapport, gain a client's trust, and build their confidence, which assists in achieving positive settlement outcomes. The Community Guides Program also contributes to link new arrivals with existing refugee, religious and cultural communities and social networks. The Community Guides program is a highly successful model for providing settlement support to individuals while also having

positive benefits for Guides, communities and services.

Some reports indicate the impact of the Community Guides program as a cost-effective and time-efficient model of immigration service delivery because The Community Guide and their clients share language, culture, refugee experience. The Community Guide can be a role model for the new clients. The Guide's own experience and success in resettlement also gives the clients encouragement. The impact of the Community Guide role for Community Guides is reported as well. Many Community Guides expressed a strong feeling of empowerment from participating with the program.

Japan also began to the program of refugee resettlement since 2010. In 2013, 13 families 63 people accepted. The refugees resettlement program in Japan should learn the important implications suggested by The Australian experiences of The Community Guides Program.

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His recent publication is "Health Problems of Refugees and Asylum Seekers: the Viewpoint of Social Determinants of Health", in Kei Hakata et.al.(eds.) *New Frontiers in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies* (Gendaijinbunsha, April 2014): "Refugee Study in Japan and achievement of Social Work Research" *Refugee Studies Journal* (No.1, 2010): and "Support by Group work for Asylum-seekers who do not have ethnic community in Japan" *Refugee Studies Journal* (No.1 2011). He currently looking at relations between Social Capital and health condition of refugees settled in Japanese local community.