

Title: Disrupted CALD youth employment transitions: a mixed-methods study

Authors: John van Kooy and Conor Butler

Affiliations: Research & Policy Unit, AMES Australia

Contact details for correspondence: Conor Butler, butlerc@ames.net.au, (03) 9938 4059

This paper has not been published before, and all data was collected in accordance with client confidentiality agreements and privacy protections.

Disrupted CALD youth employment transitions: a mixed-methods study

Abstract

Young people from refugee backgrounds often have disrupted education experiences that intersect with other forms of disadvantage, resulting in difficulties making life transitions (Beadle, 2014; Nunn et al., 2014). While specialised, learner-level support can be effective in assisting young refugees to maintain engagement (Lamb et al., 2018), the persistence of attainment issues are cause for a reassessment of the way outcomes are framed and programs are designed. This paper examines the participation of young people from refugee backgrounds in Australian education, focusing on the example of an educational reengagement program delivered in Melbourne, Victoria. Program participants work with specialist Pathways Counsellors to articulate their aspirations and engage in a range of activities that complement educational reengagement. Our analysis demonstrates the importance of intensive planning and maintaining service engagement, combined with activities that build young people's self-confidence, goal orientation and facilitate social interaction. We argue that appreciation of the 'mess, non-linearity and lack of stability' in young people's lived experiences (Woodman, 2020) can reveal incremental, attainable outcomes for refugees who face complex educational disadvantages. As cyclical and sporadic public funding arrangements for social services make this flexibility difficult to achieve, we also suggest a focus at the provider level on combining multiple sources of community support and intervention.

Keywords: youth, refugees, education, employment, pathways, CALD, VET, English language, disadvantage, careers counselling, well-being

Introduction

Increasing the participation of disadvantaged learners in education and training is a policy priority for all tiers of government in Australia. In 2009, for example, the States and Territories signed the National Partnership Agreement on Youth Transitions and Attainment, which aimed to significantly increase engagement for 15-24-year olds by 2020 (Council of Australian Governments 2009), measured by participation in post-school education or employment six months after leaving school. Today, almost 40 per cent of the Federal Education and Training budget is allocated to ‘delivering skills for today and tomorrow,’ including measures such as boosting literacy and numeracy and improving and promoting Vocational and Education Training (VET) pathways (Commonwealth of Australia 2019, p.12).

Despite this strategic investment, multiple educational barriers remain for different cohorts. In 2009, the National VET Equity Advisory Council categorised ‘disadvantaged learners’ as including people from Indigenous, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, people with a disability, unemployed learners, and learners with low levels of prior educational attainment. NCVET has noted that these categories are not mutually exclusive, as disadvantage can be ‘compounding and composite’ (Lamb et al., 2018, p. 12). Barriers also include limited access to educational institutions in regional or remote areas, and affordability concerns affecting people from low income backgrounds (Osborne 2018).

The focus of this paper is on young people from refugee backgrounds. In policy terms, this cohort is typically referred to as ‘culturally and linguistically diverse’ (CALD), defined by the Ethnic Communities’ Council of Victoria (2018, p. 1) as ‘communities with diverse language, ethnic background, nationality, dress, traditions, food, societal structures, art and religion characteristics.’ ECCV notes that it is ‘the preferred term for many government and community agencies as a contemporary descriptor for ethnic communities.’ However, forms of educational disadvantage are not universal for people with CALD backgrounds, nor is there a ‘typical’ education pathway for refugees (Nunn et al., 2014). The term CALD has been criticised for being a ‘loose’ category that potentially masks inequalities within ethnic groups and negatively associates indicators of disadvantage (such as poverty, unemployment or social isolation) with people’s embodied traits (ethnicity, language, skin colour) or migration experiences (Adusei-Asante & Adibi, 2018).

We therefore proceed with a focus on refugee status,¹ defined primarily by visa class, and focus on how this specific cohort face difficulties in the Australian education system due to forced migration and resettlement experiences (Brooker & Lawrence 2012, p.69.). Being ‘left behind’ in the Australian education system is a challenge for some refugee youth, while other forms of disadvantage are compounded by some of the challenges faced by resettled refugees—such as social isolation, community disengagement, poor communication and mental health issues.

We argue that the intersectional nature of disadvantage and the persistence of educational attainment issues for refugee youth are cause for a reassessment of the way outcomes are framed, debated and used to assess program success. Our analysis aligns with other research in advocating for a range of practice approaches to assist

¹ We also acknowledge that refugee status itself, as a starting point for research, has also been problematised (Bakewell, 2008); however, this is the primary client group in our empirical research.

young refugees with their multiple and non-linear transitions (Fagan et al. 2018, p7). A focus on maintaining engagement with services, and intensive planning and support for individual journeys through education and employment, are critical. Appreciation of the ‘mess, non-linearity and lack of stability’ in young people’s experiences (Woodman, 2020) reveals incremental, attainable goals for refugees who face intersecting settlement, mental health and learning disadvantages. As cyclical and sporadic public funding arrangements for social services make this flexibility difficult to achieve, we also suggest a focus at the provider level on combining multiple sources of community support and intervention.

Refugee educational transitions in context

Scholarly accounts of youth transitions have historically focused on linear trajectories of movement between family, education and employment status. Young people’s ‘readiness’ for adulthood and the job market are often described in terms of human capital, and ‘hard’ or ‘soft’ skills (e.g. literacy and numeracy, job-specific skills vs. attitudes, behaviours and communication skills) (Fagan et al., 2018; Taylor, 2005; Wyn et al., 2012). However, Bowman et al. (2015) highlight ‘major conceptual shortcomings’ in research on youth transitions and argue that more and better evidence is needed to develop new frameworks. It follows that transitions research requires nuanced approaches to the issues faced by young people facing intersecting forms of disadvantage, such as refugee youth.

Nunn et al. (2014) argue that life course transitions for young refugees are mediated by education, but that young people’s aspirations, responsibilities, family and networks must also be understood when they do not meet ‘expected’ education timeframes. Brooker and Lawrence (2012) also highlight a gap in scholarly literature around ‘how [refugees’] cultural and educational challenges may be related to each other.’ According to Morrice (2011 p.105), the cultural dimensions of refugee youth transitions are characterised by a non-linear process of ‘self-reconstruction,’ as young people learn to understand their lives in relation to both their cultural history and within dominant national cultures in the host country. Important questions remain concerning young peoples’ freedom to reflect on these issues amidst the uncertain and dislocating experience of forced migration and resettlement, while also attending to the Australian cultural and economic expectation to ‘define one’s goals and narrate the trajectory of one’s life’ (Abkhezr et al., 2015).

Evidence-informed policy approaches to supporting youth transitions vary. In the context of VET in New Zealand, for instance, Strathdee (2013) categorises such approaches as being either ‘punishing’ (focusing on attitudes of young people, typically assumed to be ‘lazy’), ‘motivating’ (focusing on aspirations and skills-building), or ‘bridging’ (focusing on building networks, particularly with employers). Others have called for more integrated approaches that incorporate elements of both motivational and bridging programs to assist cohorts experiencing intersectional, non-linear challenges. Beadle (2014, p.28), in surveying the literature evaluating successful aspects of transitions programs in Australia, found common elements that fall under both categories. Successful models are likely to be more holistic in dealing with young people’s lives; offer multiple options for youth lacking confidence or motivation; engage broader community involvement (e.g. through mentorship or work experience programs); and provide central coordination between mainstream services such as health and employment (Davies et al., 2011).

Bowman et al. (2015) argue that there is a lack of evidence around ‘what works’ at a program level, and point out under-acknowledged structural concerns such as high unemployment in Australia—outside of the scope of transition programs but nevertheless playing an important role in mediating youth transitions (Bowman et al. 2015, p.16). Lamb et al. (2018, p.7) have advocated for more documented evidence of ‘the types of interventions and activities that work best to engage learners and promote learner success [and] assist providers to improve the quality of their VET delivery.’ In this context, we examine an example of an educational reengagement program delivered by AMES Australia in Melbourne as an example.

AMES reengagement support for disadvantaged learners in Victoria

AMES Australia (‘AMES’) is a specialist settlement services provider and Registered Training Organisation (RTO) supporting refugees and newly arrived migrants, and a major provider of English language, education, community engagement and employment services. Current programs build on experience delivering specialised multicultural youth services with Commonwealth and State Government support.

The AMES Youth Services model includes core elements of case management, individual pathway planning and referrals, with the overall aim to support high-needs young people to reengage with education and employment. AMES works primarily with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds, often referred from humanitarian settlement services or other providers seeking a specialised intervention for CALD clients. The model functions by integrating small grants (e.g. for providing driving lessons), medium-sized programs (e.g. for outdoor education/youth camps) and State Government support, as well as longstanding partnerships with youth specialist organisations and TAFEs, allowing for multiple streamlined and integrated referral pathways. This approach brings young people into contact with their local communities through sports, arts, women’s groups and theatre; provides access to job clubs and leadership programs; and furthers education and training opportunities.

The AMES practice model draws on culturally responsive ‘narrative career counselling’ (Abkhezr 2015, p.76) whereby the young person and counsellor co-define career, education and goals. Pathways Counsellors work with young people to articulate their own Learning and Achievement Plan, in which timeframes, projects and activities can be prioritised by participants while the provider connects the individual with a range of internal supports and external partner organisations. Participants may undertake accredited VET courses such as Foundation Skills Training in English as an Additional Language (EAL), while others may work on individual or collaborative projects through the Certificate in General Education for Adults (CGEA). Aside from these formal education outcomes, participants build confidence and an understanding of processes underpinning ‘goal-setting’ or goal clarification and identification. The identification of goals often facilitates a ‘cultural transition’ for refugee participants who are moving between different education systems—a process often overlooked in policies underpinned by assumptions about shared language and cultural backgrounds among students (Fagan et al., 2018). Participants are also linked with opportunities to build social and economic capital through group activities, applied learning projects and workplace experience.

Research method

The analysis in this paper is based on a feasibility study for the evaluation of an AMES youth educational reengagement program in Melbourne, conducted by the AMES Research and Policy Unit. The purpose of the original study was to appraise the quality of existing program data on participant pathways, and to scope evaluation methods and questions for further investigation. In doing so, the authors constructed a sample from 2018 administrative program data and analysed participant demographics, engagement with education and employment, and program outcomes.

Data was provided by the AMES Youth Services team to the researchers in the form of de-identified participant records extracted from the program database. During intake to the program, participants sign a registration form and confidentiality agreement which includes a privacy statement that describes how participant information (including details of ongoing enrolment and activities) may be used by the organisation to support management, planning and evaluation.

As researchers we acknowledge the limitations of being both situated within the organisation in question, and not representative of the study subjects themselves. As such, we adopt the realist stance that we cannot achieve a completely objective understanding of social phenomena—we can only attempt to understand the ‘real world’ for participants from as many different angles as possible (Archer et al., 1998; Iosifides, 2011). This study is therefore the first step in a multi-staged, mixed methods research project designed to be conducted over a longer period, involving closer attention to young people’s narratives of their own experiences.

Sample of AMES Youth Services participants

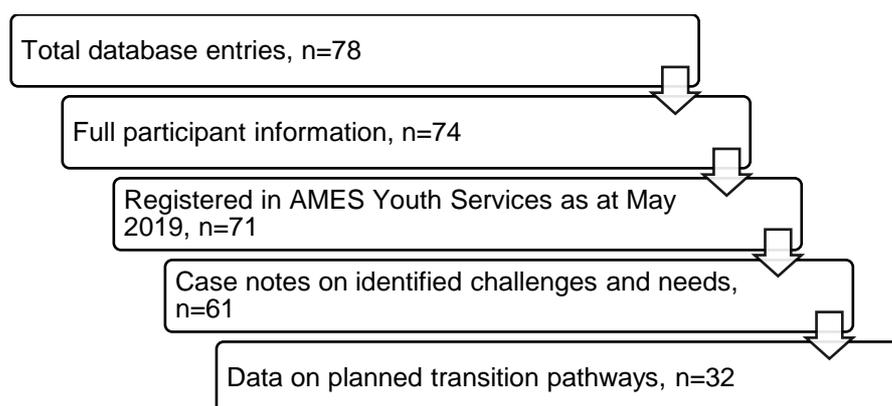
Using the database extract, we constructed a sample of participants enrolled in the AMES educational reengagement program during the 2018 calendar year. The extract contained 78 participant entries, with information correct as at the reporting date of May 2019. All identifying information (full names, dates of birth, and residential postcodes) were omitted from the database to protect participants’ privacy.

A summary of the inclusion/exclusion criteria for analysis is provided in Figure 1. From the initial extract, we excluded four (4) entries which did not contain demographic information (region of birth and level of education), and three (3) entries relating to participants that had withdrawn from the program—in both cases there was insufficient data to include them in the analysis. From this point, we included only those participant entries where full data was available in the form of case notes by Pathways Counsellors. Full data was necessary to establish a clear picture of issues faced by refugee young people. As well as demographic information, these data included:

- identified challenges to successful reengagement in education and training
- identified education and training needs to support reengagement
- any articulated goals and aspirations
- planned engagement activities and/or transition pathways.

After applying these inclusion criteria, the sample was reduced to 32 participants. As our analysis was conducted for an evaluation feasibility study, we examined only the preliminary outcomes recorded in case notes. The planned full outcomes evaluation will examine more detailed program and participant data.

Figure 1. Inclusion and exclusion process for analysis of participant data



With the sample at 32, we derived basic descriptive statistics of the cohort, including demographics, education, employment and identified challenges to reengagement. We then analysed case notes data following Attride-Stirling’s (2001) thematic network analysis approach. Four key organising themes were identified: *participant challenges*; *participant goals and aspirations*; *service activities and support*; and *preliminary outcomes*. Each organising theme was then populated with basic sub-themes identified in the text of case notes. The results of this analysis are presented in the Discussion section below. To situate our empirical findings, we compared AMES program data with publicly available statistical data on the education levels of refugee youth from the Australian Census and Migrants Integrated Dataset (ACMID).

Findings

Population data

The ACMID data reveals some observable differences between young people from refugee and Australian-born backgrounds in terms of employment, education and training. The proportions of refugee youth aged 15-24 years who were ‘fully’ or ‘partially engaged’ on Census night are similar to those of Australian-born young people (see Table 1 below). However, the proportions of young people not engaged in employment, education and training (NEET) were higher among refugees, and especially those who arrived in Australia within five years of the Census date. These disparities were highest amongst the 20-24-year-old age group (see Table 2 below).

Table 1. Engagement in employment, education and training (15-24 year-olds) by permanent migration status, 2016 (%)

	Refugee	Refugee (< 5yrs)	Australian-born
Fully engaged	77.0	77.6	77.8
Partially engaged	8.5	7.5	11.4
Not engaged	14.5	14.8	10.7

Source: ABS 2016

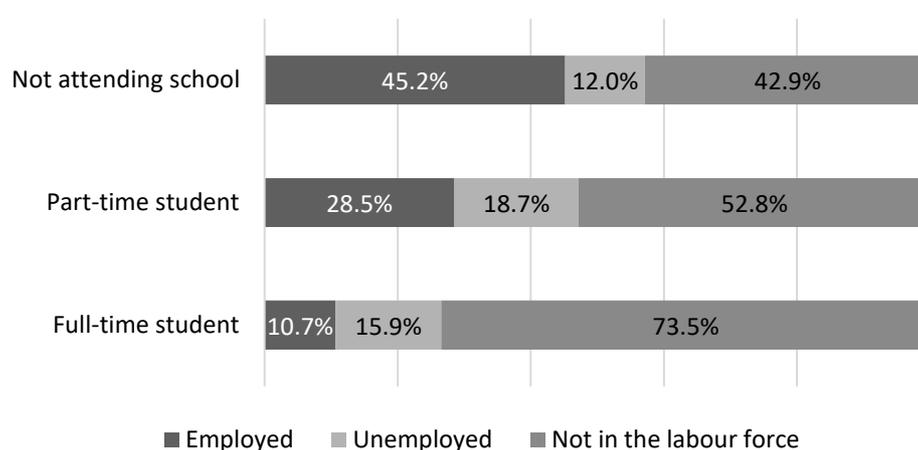
Table 2. Engagement in employment, education and training (20-24 year-olds) by permanent migration status, 2016 (%)

	Refugee	Refugee (< 5yrs)	Australian-born
Fully engaged	64.6	64.8	69.9
Partially engaged	13.3	12.2	15.7
Not engaged	22.1	23.0	14.6

Source: ABS 2016

A similar trend can be observed when we examine data on the labour force and educational status of young refugees. Nearly one-fifth (18%) of all recently arrived humanitarian visa holders aged 20-24 years were not attending school and not in the labour force on Census night. Moreover, close to half (43%) of all recently arrived 20-24-year-old refugees who were not attending school were also not in the labour force (not employed and not actively looking for work) (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2. Engagement in education, training and employment, permanent Humanitarian visa holders (20-24 years) arrived 2012-2016 (%)



Source: ABS 2016

Finally, there are significant differences between recently arrived refugees and the Australian-born population when comparing levels of educational attainment (see Table 3 below). The majority (85%) of all recently arrived refugees between 20-24 years of age had an educational attainment of Year 12 equivalent or lower on Census night. Nearly one-fifth (18%) of this cohort had an educational attainment of Year 8 or below, and 10% had no educational attainment at all. In comparison, almost all (96%) of Australian-born young people had an educational attainment higher than Year 12 (i.e. at least a post-school qualification).

Table 3. Highest level of educational attainment (20-24-year-olds) by migration status (permanent Humanitarian visas arrived 2012-2016), (%)

	Refugee	Australian-born
Bachelor Degree or higher	1.8	15.0
Diploma	3.5	6.4

Certificate III & IV	9.2	63.1
Certificate I & II	1.0	11.5
Years 10-12	40.7	1.4
Year 9	6.2	0.5
Year 8 or below	17.5	1.9
No educational attainment	9.6	0.1

Source: ABS 2016

Our analysis of secondary data suggests that young refugees, particularly those recently arrived and aged 20-24 years, are typically faring worse than their Australian-born counterparts in terms of conventional educational attainment and employment outcomes. This finding highlights the importance of acknowledging refugee status, given previous research that has found first and second-generation migrants aged between 15-19 years are not a disadvantaged group (Chesters, 2015).

AMES Youth Services cohort

We analysed demographic, education and employment data extracted from the service database to establish the key characteristics of participants in the AMES reengagement program. Sample characteristics are summarised in Table 4 below. Our sample represents mostly overseas-born people aged around 22 years, with similar indicators to the population reference group described above.² However, a greater proportion of our sample (36%) had a level of education at Year 8 level or below. Nearly all (97%) were unemployed at the time of the data being extracted (after almost one year in the program), and most (91%) had never worked in Australia.

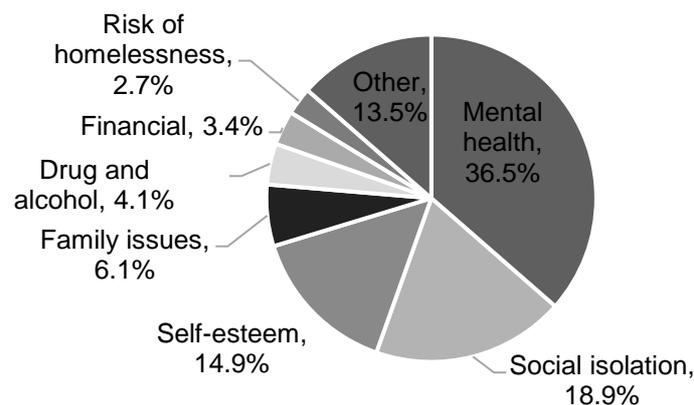
Table 4. Sample characteristics (n=32)

Average age	21.9 years
Average time in program	49.2 weeks
% Identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	3.0
% Identifies as having a disability	12.1
% Region of birth:	
Oceania (Australia)	27.3
North Africa & Middle East	27.3
Southeast Asia	21.2
Sub-Saharan Africa	15.2
Southern & Central Asia	6.1
Southern & Eastern Europe	3.0
% Highest level of school completed:	
Years 10-12	45.5
Year 9	18.2
Year 8 or below	33.3
No formal education	3.0
% Unemployed	97.0
% Never worked	90.9

² The reengagement program is open to young people regardless of country of birth and/or visa status but all AMES services are tailored to people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. The Australian-born participants in our study were primarily first-generation children from refugee families.

To identify the key issues facing young people in our sample, we categorised and counted ‘challenges and issues’ recorded by Pathways Counsellors in case notes. These are summarised in Figure 3 below. Across the sample, we counted 148 separate references to ‘issues’ or ‘challenges’ (most participants had more than one issue recorded). Prevalent issues identified relate to participants’ mental health, social isolation, disengagement and self-esteem. Symptomatic issues such as drug and alcohol misuse or financial constraints are also significant. The category ‘Other’ includes small numbers of responses related to transport-related barriers, corrections or justice issues and other health barriers.

Figure 3. Identified challenges requiring support (n=148)



Participant pathways

We identified four top-level themes and multiple sub-themes in our analysis of participant pathways:

1. Participant challenges

Young people in our sample commonly experienced challenges related to mental health, social isolation and self-esteem. Case notes reveal that many participants had experienced past trauma from war and forced migration experiences that were linked with ongoing depression, anxiety, social isolation, withdrawal and learning difficulties. For example, one participant required psychological and cognitive assessments to determine the nature of possible learning difficulties induced by trauma from war, and eligibility for education support through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Some participants also experienced barriers to reengaging in education and employment such as family violence or drug and alcohol misuse.

The multiple, overlapping barriers identified in our sample demonstrate the compounding nature of educational disadvantage for refugee youth. One especially strong relationship, in our study and in scholarly literature, is found between mental health issues, resilience and behavioural problems that obstruct educational attainment (Ziaian et al., 2012). Our findings also reflect the well-established connection between fractured peer relationships, poor social and emotional adjustment, and school absenteeism (Lau et al., 2018). Given this complexity, we argue that different program interventions are needed to assist refugee youth with what are likely to be multiple, ‘messy’ transitions. Measurement of formal education outcomes such as course completion and educational attainment may be facilitated by investing in

complementary support that builds overall resilience, social reengagement and individual confidence (see ‘Activities’ below).

2. Participant goals and aspirations

Pathways Counsellors identified the goals and aspirations of participants using cross-cultural communication techniques and ‘narrative counselling’ (Abkhezr et al., 2015). Examples of participant goals described in case notes include career aspirations (such as technical, trades, and public health jobs, and digital literacy) as well as the pursuit of personal interests such as music education and community participation. Several participants recognised the enabling potential of increasing their English literacy, developing greater personal independence and overcoming pre-existing barriers such as financial debts. These data indicate that many participants required at least one shorter-term transition to be able to define longer-term career and life goals.

Acknowledgement of the requirement for multiple social and economic ‘transitions’ over the life course is a key feature of the practice approach employed by Pathways Counsellors and supported by literature on young refugees’ settlement experiences in Australia (Nunn et al., 2014). Fagan et al., (2018, p.6-7) conceptualise the non-educational and non-vocational transitions young refugees must make as: *spatial* (becoming comfortable in unfamiliar places); *interpersonal* (relating to friends, teachers, tutors etc. in unfamiliar professional or collegial contexts); *linguistic* (relating to others in a new language in spoken, academic, professional, or informal registers), and; *cultural* (comprehending new education systems, new ways of working, planning and thinking about one’s future). These more abstract transitions are not well accounted for within Australian education institutions. The diversity of future aspirations identified by participants suggests there may be more flexible and attainable goals that can aid reengagement in mainstream education and overcoming intersecting settlement, mental health and learning disadvantages.

3. Service activities and support

AMES practitioners utilised a mentoring and counselling approach to support for young people, with a diverse range of activities planned. For participants in our sample, activities included: enrolment in accredited and non-accredited English classes; provision of individualised careers pathway counselling; project-based general education and foundational skills attainment; financial assistance for employment-related expenses; service referrals and enrolment/application support; encouragement to pursue personal interests (e.g. music education); coordination and facilitation of youth-centred events; outdoor education (‘camps’); social events; and facilitation of linkages to established community groups.

While many of these supports were non-vocational in nature, participants were also mentored throughout the program to consider longer-term career aspirations. For example, one participant expressed their ‘dream’ to pursue a career in Computer Science; however, recognising the need to develop more advanced literacy and numeracy skills to obtain a higher qualification in this field, the participant was supported to undertake a trades qualification that would facilitate ongoing paid work, formal training, and English language acquisition in a workplace setting.

Engaging refugee youth in counselling and multiple opportunities for social contact introduces participants to new spatial, interpersonal, linguistic and cultural environments. Continued engagement facilitated by Pathways Counsellors also appears to be the greatest programmatic challenge. Participants who remained in the program for more than 12 months regularly progressed from a goal-setting stage to become actively involved in seeking vocations or vocational education. However, some participants also became ‘uncontactable,’ reflecting the difficulties that practitioners face in maintaining engagement. Given the prevalence of social isolation and disengagement, and the critical importance of intensive client support (Davies et al., 2011), successfully maintaining client participation may be considered a recognisable achievement of the AMES program.

4. Preliminary outcomes

Our initial appraisal of participant outcomes indicates a range of stated benefits, such as: securing stable and long-term accommodation; completion of EAL courses; full, part-time and casual employment outcomes; participation in formal and informal community groups; and (re)engagement with mental health and trauma counselling services. Considering the characteristics and challenges of the cohort as described above, other types of outcomes can be identified in the data. Examples of this were: self-reported improvements in confidence; improved ability to define goals; expanded social networks; increased motivation to seek employment or volunteer work; and development/articulations of career aspirations.

Some Pathways Counsellors also found it relevant to note an ‘outcome’ when participants had maintained engagement and continued to persist with their goals. As above, we consider ‘maintaining engagement’ to be an important feature of the AMES practice model. A balanced emphasis on both vocational and non-vocational (personal, social, cultural) outcomes by the AMES program is positively related with the increased engagement that the sample largely achieved.

Conclusions

Refugee youth may be disadvantaged in Australian education due to multiple, overlapping barriers and disruptions to their education pathways. Experiences of forced migration can significantly affect individual mental and physical health, as well as opportunities for social and cultural interaction. The findings of our study indicate that multiple, short-term transitions (spatial, interpersonal, linguistic and cultural) precede longer-term life course transitions, as conventionally defined. This challenges service providers and policymakers in Australia to rethink institutional norms that emphasise linear pathways and quantifiable participation measures—such as enrolment or completion rates—for disadvantaged learners. Our study highlights the critical importance of acknowledging and resourcing non-educational support such as mental health services, building self-confidence and independence, goal-orientation and facilitating community connectedness and social interaction.

Our analysis leads us to propose that intensive support delivered by specialised service providers with intercultural competencies, and involving multiple sources of public, not-for-profit and community support, can assist refugee youth to overcome learning barriers and reconnect with their long-term ambitions. The next step in our research will be to validate this conclusion through an outcomes-focused evaluation

educational reengagement programs. We also intend to grapple with the unanswered question of whether a more flexible approach can be successfully integrated within current public service contract arrangements. At present, cyclical and sporadic funding conditions for specialised youth services make this flexibility difficult to achieve, which compels practitioners to find ‘workarounds’ that benefit participants rather than pursue these approaches intensively.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to acknowledge Jonathan Mitchell, Manager AMES Youth Services for his support and input to this study; AMES Pathways Counsellors for their insights and tireless work supporting young people; and Dr Tess Demediuk, Senior Manager, AMES Research & Policy for her considered comments on this paper.

References

- Abkhezr, P., McMahon, M., & Rossouw, P. (2015). Youth with refugee backgrounds in Australia: Contextual and practical considerations for career counsellors. *Australian Journal of Career Development, 24*(2), 71–80.
- Adusei-Asante, K., & Adibi, H. (2018). The “Culturally And Linguistically Diverse” (CALD) label: A critique using African migrants as exemplar. *The Australasian Review of African Studies, 39*(2), 74–94.
- Archer, M., Bhaskar, R., Collier, A., Lawson, T., & Norrie, A. (Eds.). (1998). *Critical Realism: Essential Readings*. Routledge.
- Attride-Stirling, J. (2001). Thematic networks: An analytic tool for qualitative research. *Qualitative Research, 1*(3), 385–405.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2016). *Australian Census and Migrants Integrated Dataset* [TableBuilder. Findings based on the use of ABS TableBuilder data]. Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- Bakewell, O. (2008). Research Beyond the Categories: The Importance of Policy Irrelevant Research into Forced Migration. *Journal of Refugee Studies, 21*(4), 432–453.
- Beadle, S. (2014). *Facilitating the Transition to Employment for Refugee Young People: A data update and review of recent literature with a focus on “what works?”* Centre for Multicultural Youth and Lord Mayor’s Charitable Foundation.
- Brooker, A., & Lawrence, J. A. (2012). Educational and cultural challenges of bicultural adult immigrant and refugee students in Australia. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning, 52*(1), 66.
- Chesters, J. (2015). Does migrant status affect educational achievement, aspirations, and attainment? *Multicultural Education Review, 7*(4), 197–212.
- Commonwealth of Australia. (2019). *Portfolio Budget Statements 2019–20. Budget Related Paper No. 1.5: Education and Training Portfolio*.
- Council of Australian Governments (COAG). (2009). *National Partnership Agreement on Youth Transitions and Attainment*. Council of Australian Governments.

- Davies, M., Lamb, S., & Doecke, E. (2011). *Strategic Review of Effective Re-Engagement Models for Disengaged Learners*. Centre for Research on Education Systems, University of Melbourne.
- ECCV. (2018). *ECCV Glossary of Terms*. Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria.
- Fagan, S., Baker, S., Dantas, J., Gower, S., Singh, S., Taiwo, M., & Ross, A. M. (2018). *(Re)claiming social capital: Improving language and cultural pathways for students from refugee backgrounds into Australian higher education* (Final Report). Office for Learning and Teaching, Department of Education.
- Iosifides, T. (2011). *Qualitative methods in migration studies: A critical realist perspective*. Routledge.
- Lamb, S., Maire, Q., Walstab, A., Newman, G., Doecke, E., & Davies, M. (2018). *Improving participation and success in VET for disadvantaged learners* [Research report]. National Centre for Vocational Education Research.
- Lau, W., Silove, D., Edwards, B., Forbes, D., Bryant, R., McFarlane, A., Hadzi-Pavlovic, D., Steel, Z., Nickerson, A., Van Hooff, M., Felmingham, K., Cowlshaw, S., Alkemade, N., Kartal, D., & O'Donnell, M. (2018). Adjustment of refugee children and adolescents in Australia: Outcomes from wave three of the Building a New Life in Australia study. *BMC Medicine*, 16(1), 157.
- Morrice, L. (2011). *Being a refugee: Learning and identity. A longitudinal study of refugees in the UK*. Trentham Books.
- National VET Equity Advisory Council (NVEAC). (2009). *Summary of equity stakeholder messages: October—November 2009*.
- Nunn, C., McMichael, C., Gifford, S. M., & Correa-Velez, I. (2014). 'I came to this country for a better life': Factors mediating employment trajectories among young people who migrated to Australia as refugees during adolescence. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 17(9), 1205–1220.
- Osborne, K. (2018). *VET's role in mitigating disadvantage*. Committee for Economic Development of Australia.
- Taylor, A. (2005). What employers look for: The skills debate and the fit with youth perceptions. *Journal of Education and Work*, 18(2), 201–218.
- Woodman, D. (2020). Social Change and Generation. In J. Wyn, H. Cahill, D. Woodman, H. Cuervo, C. Leccardi, & J. Chesters (Eds.), *Youth and the New Adulthood: Generations of Change* (pp. 31–46). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-3365-5_3
- Wyn, J., Lantz, S., & Harris, A. (2012). Beyond the 'transitions' metaphor: Family relations and young people in late modernity. *Journal of Sociology*, 48(1), 3–22.
- Ziaian, T., Anstiss, H. de, Antoniou, G., Sawyer, M., & Baghurst, P. (2012). Depressive symptomatology and service utilisation among refugee children and adolescents living in South Australia. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 17(3), 146–152.