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# New Land, New Life: Refugee Integration and Pathways to Employment

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# What I plan to talk about today

- Refugee Policy in NZ
- Quota Refugees Ten Years On programme of research
- Pathways to employment
- What is the Government doing to improve resettlement outcomes



# Refugee Policy in New Zealand

- Refugee Quota Programme
  - Formal quota established 1987
  - 750 places a year
  - Orientation programme – 6 weeks
- Successful refugee status claimants
  - Relatively small numbers – 91 in 09/10
  - Numbers have decreased since 01/02
- Family reunification policies
  - Un-known number of people from 'refugee-like' situations





Quota Refugees Ten Years On:  
Perspectives on Integration, Community  
And Identity

# Overall objective

- Build a platform of knowledge and understanding about integration, community and identity
- Give voice to former refugees and to inform future resettlement policy and service provision



# Research Approach – Mixed Methods

- Quantitative
  - Face-to-face survey 512 people
  - 41% response rate
- Qualitative
  - Interviews with stakeholders
  - Six Focus Groups
  - In-depth interviews with 25 participants



# Who came to NZ 1993 to 1999 through the Refugee Quota Category?

- Country of origin
  - Iraq – 29%
  - Vietnam – 19%
  - Somalia – 16%
  - Ethiopia – 15%
  - Other non-Africa – 15%
  - Other Africa – 7%
- Age group
  - 0-19 – 36%
  - 20-29 – 26%
  - 30-44 – 29%
  - 45+ - 10%
- Gender
  - Female -44%
  - Male – 56%





**New Land, New Life –  
Pathways to employment**



# What do former refugees themselves say about the importance of work?

- What are the three most important things for feeling part of NZ?
  - Top was having a good job (48%)
  - Other important things
    - Having family in NZ (44%)
    - Being able to speak English well (38%)
    - Feeling safe (38%)
- What are your personal Goals for the next 5 years?
  - Top goal was having a good job (46%)



# Key employment findings

## Prior to coming to NZ:

- 62% aged 13+ had worked

## Work in New Zealand:

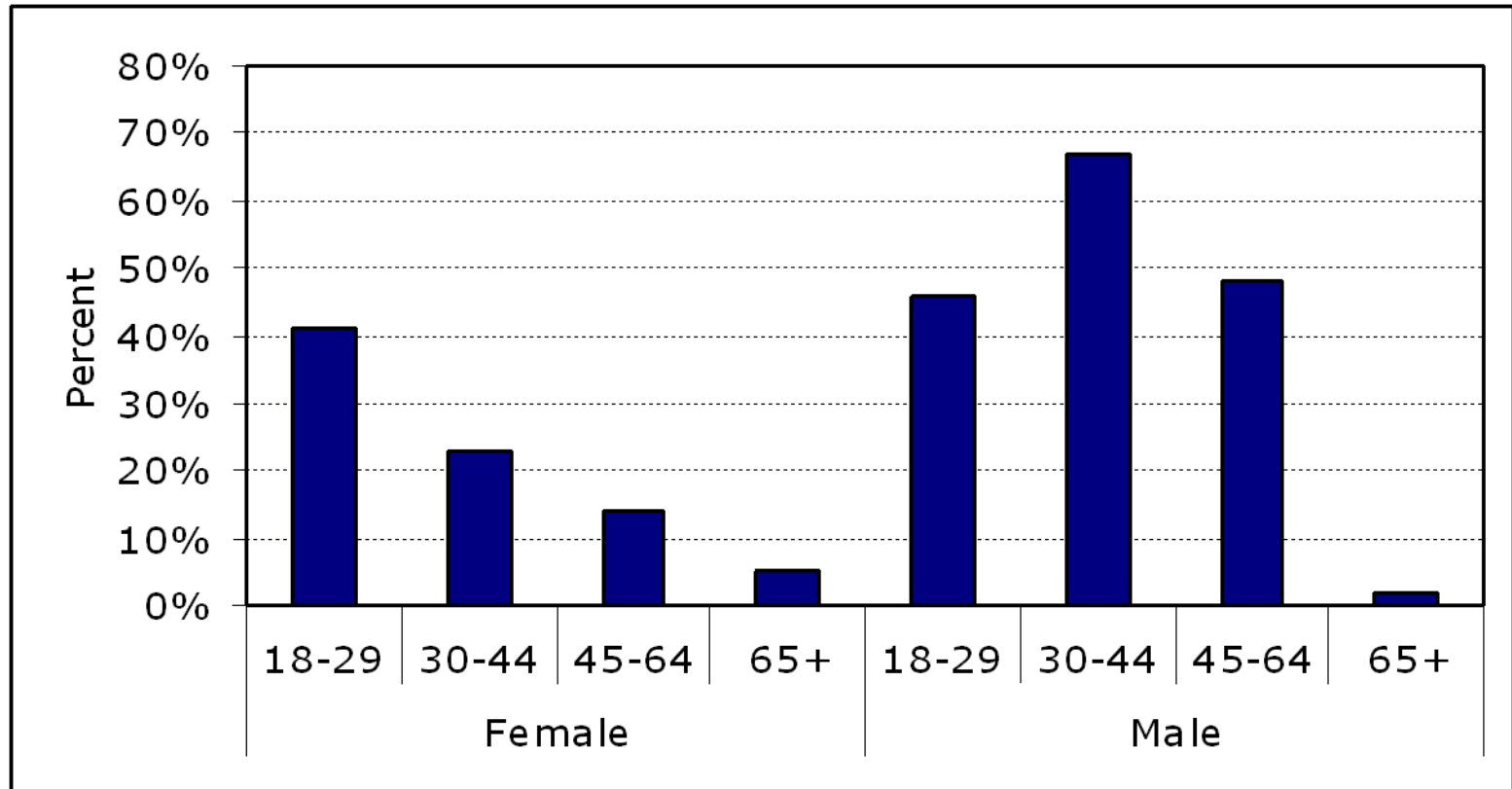
- 73% had worked in a paid job in NZ

## Currently working (last 7 days)

- 42% had worked in the last 7 days
  - Includes full time and part time
  - Includes unpaid work in family business or farm



# Who was more likely to currently be working?



# Key factors associated with current employment

Who was significantly more likely to be in employment?

- Those who did not have a disability
- Those who arrived in NZ aged between ages of 13-19
- Men
- Those who could speak English well or very well



# Relationship between employment & other domains

Those in employment were more likely to:

- Own their house
  - 27% compared to 11%
- Speak English well or very well
  - 86% compared to 60%
- Rate their health as excellent or very good
  - 65% compared to 40%
- Have friends from outside their community
  - 93% compared to 77%



# Key facilitators to employment



- Attitude
  - *I walked around asking for a job. I asked many businesses.*
  - *You need to have a, you know, positive attitude...Like you know, I cannot stay on the benefit all my life*
- English Ability
  - *My English is too little. I can only do a job that nobody wants.*
- Skills & NZ Qualifications
  - *So you need to be well informed about, knowing what the job market offers. Having the right skills that suits the job market*



# Key facilitators to employment

- NZ cultural knowledge
  - *I have been quite lucky just because I have been brought up in New Zealand, so I am very much, I don't want to say westernised, but I understand how it [the labour market] works*
- Work experience
  - *If you interview ten people and one has [New Zealand] experience, who are you going to pick? The one with work experience, if they are [the] same.*



# Key facilitators to employment

- Community networks
  - *So my first job was through my cousin, like him explaining for us and everything and actually driving us there, because he had a car...*
- Structural factors
  - Economy
  - Discrimination
- Personal Factors
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Health







**What is Government doing to  
Improve resettlement  
outcomes?**

# New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy

- Whole of government approach to improving refugee resettlement outcomes
- Outcomes framework
- Actions
  - Pre-arrival orientation
  - Comprehensive Resettlement Plans



# Conclusion

- The news is not great
  - The challenge of youth unemployment
- Importance of employment to Integration
  - Former refugees themselves consider it important to developing a sense of belonging
- But....other aspects of integration also important
  - Participation
  - Role of care-giving
- The road ahead...
  - What can we learn about improving employment outcomes?



# Quota Refugees Ten Years On Programme of Research



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<http://www.dol.govt.nz/research/migration/refugees/quotarefugees.asp>

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