

Officer responsible Community Advocate	Author Bruce Meder, Community Activities Adviser
Corporate Plan Output: Community Activities	

The purpose of this report is to seek support from the Board for the work of Refugee Resettlement Support (RRS) with refugees in the Board's area.

BACKGROUND

Refugee Resettlement Support was established in 1995 and is a provider of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and life skills classes (with child-care) to former refugees who are parents with babies and preschoolers. They are the only Christchurch provider of qualified social work services to former refugees and at risk new migrants.

Refugee Resettlement Support employed three part-time Community Workers/Interpreters who are former refugees from Somalia. The agency works with more than 400 former refugees and migrants from 17 different ethnicities – 119 (30%) live within the Shirley and Papanui Wards. Of these clients the largest group of 180 are from Somalia, with 55 living in the Shirley/Papanui Wards.

PROGRAMMES/ACTIVITIES

There are three major programmes/activities that Refugee Resettlement Support run that require resourcing.

1. Community Workers/Interpreters

The three workers are extremely effective in the community and have established networks with government agencies and health and education providers. They also provide an interpretation service.

Cost of service: \$40,440.

2. After School Maths Classes for Somali High School Students

Most adolescent Somali refugees arrive here after several years living in Kenyan refugee camps with little or no formal education. Maths and science are the subjects that these adolescents have most problems with. The provision of extra tuition addresses some of these study problems.

Cost: \$10,800.

3. ESOL and Life Skill Classes

ESOL and Life Skill Classes are offered for absolute beginners/beginners and also elementary/pre-intermediate. Each group has two classes of 1½ hours each per week. Classes are taught by primary and ESOL trained teachers and each class has childcare provided onsite by an Early Childhood qualified supervisor, assistant and volunteers. With the numbers of pre-school children and babies accompanying parents, the organisation of transport to and from classes is an important factor. The women who attend these classes are particularly disadvantaged by:

- Traumatic recent life experiences (may have spent years in refugee camps).
- Little or no knowledge of English.
- Being members of a very different culture from the culture in which they now live.
- Little or no formal education.
- Lack of transport.
- Low skills and low self esteem.

Cost of service: \$11,740.

SUPPORT REQUIRED

With a large number of the client population living within the Shirley/Papanui Community Board area, it is appropriate that this Board consider assisting Refugee Resettlement Support in providing services to this community.

Recommendation: That the Board allocate a grant of \$8,000 to Refugee Resettlement Support from its 1998/99 Community Services Fund to cover:

- Community Workers \$4,000
- After School Maths Classes \$2,000
- ESOL/Lifeskills Classes \$2,000

Chairperson's

Recommendation: That this application lie on the table and come back to the April meeting following this group making a presentation to the Deputations Meeting.