Effective philanthropic support for diverse communities

Executive Summary

CENTRE for SOCIAL IMPACT

The Oryza Foundation
ASIAN ARTS AREN'T ALL MARTIAL!

Executive summary

Introduction and context

Foundation North's new strategy has identified *"strengthening social cohesion within and between our diverse communities, particularly for refugee- and migrant-background communities"* as one of its priorities.

Foundation North recognised the importance of understanding the Auckland and Northland regions' ethnically diverse communities, the needs of refugee- and migrant-background communities and how to improve social cohesion within these communities and with other communities in our region. This research provides advice on effective philanthropic practice to support the needs of refugee- and migrant-background communities.

Research was undertaken by the Centre for Social Impact and The Oryza Foundation which included a data analysis, literature review and series of key informant interviews with stakeholders from the refugee and migrant support sectors.

The region's ethnically diverse communities

Auckland

The Auckland region is the most ethnically diverse in New Zealand, with: 37% of the population born overseas (24% nationally); 22% of the population identifying as Asian (11% nationally); 14% of the population identifying as Pacific (7% nationally); and 2% of the population identifying as Middle Eastern, Latin American, and African (MELAA) (1% nationally).

In Auckland, ethnic diversity varies by local board. Seven out of the 21 local boards have populations where almost half of their communities were born overseas (40-49%). Over time, ethnic diversity is projected to increase, with one in three people likely to identify as Asian by 2038.

In the past 10 years Auckland has resettled more than 2,000 quota refugees, with the highest numbers arriving from Myanmar, Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine and Sri Lanka. The current refugee quota policy is focused on Asia-Pacific countries.

Policy change is seeing large numbers of refugees resettled outside Auckland, with Auckland receiving only 10% of the most recent quota. Anecdotal evidence from interviewees participating in this research suggested, however, that people resettled outside Auckland are migrating back to the region to be better connected to their communities i.e. communities with similar backgrounds, cultures, ethnicities and languages.

Northland

Northland's ethnic diversity is lower than the New Zealand average, with: only 14% of the population born overseas; 3% of the population identifying as Pasifika; 3% of the population identifying as Asian; and less than 1% identifying as MELAA.

Northland's ethnic diversity is expected to increase rapidly by 2038, with a 58% increase in the number of people identifying as Asian and a 105% increase in the number of people identifying as Pasifika. Interview participants highlighted a need for cross-sector readiness in Northland to respond to this growing diversity – including employer readiness and community sector readiness to provide settlement support.

Priority issues for refugee - and migrant-background communities

Interviews with key informants identified a range of factors that can affect positive resettlement for refugee-background communities and positive settlement for migrant-background communities – including age, gender, ethnicity, language proficiency, religion, marital status, sexuality, income and education levels, and disability. The intersectionality of these factors was also highlighted as important.

For refugee-background communities, the resettlement funding policy was identified as a significant issue, with people seeking and granted asylum and refugees arriving in New Zealand under sponsorship from resident family members not currently eligible for support via government-funded service provision.

A range of issues affecting refugee- and migrant-background communities was identified through the research. Priority issues include:

- transition and access to affordable and appropriate housing
- access to employment
- barriers related to English language proficiency
- challenges navigating New Zealand systems and services
- barriers to accessing services, including transport
- family stress and domestic violence, particularly where there are key contextual factors such as cultural expectations, generation-based gaps in the settlement experience, and stresses caused by refugee family reunification
- social isolation
- tensions between and within communities – including discrimination and issues related to social cohesion.

Across these issues, people from refugee backgrounds, women, older people and new migrants were identified as being most likely to be vulnerable/have the greatest needs.

Priority sector challenges

Interviews with key informants identified a range of challenges experienced by communities, agencies and service providers working in the refugee and migrant sectors. These challenges were described as barriers that limit the coordination, effectiveness and sustainability of services/solutions. Priority challenges include:

- a lack of collaboration
- a lack of cohesive regional (and local) strategy – particularly in the resettlement sector, which is a smaller sector and has more potential for strategic coordination
- fragmentation between local government, central government, service providers and communities
- issues with the accessibility and suitability of funding
- issues with community and provider capacity and capabilities.

Effective practice – responding to ethnically diverse communities and strengthening social cohesion

Interviews with key informants, alongside evidence and case studies identified through the literature review, highlighted key practices that have the most potential to support responsiveness to ethnically diverse communities and to strengthen social cohesion.

Effective community approaches/practices include:

- strengthening collaboration

- building community development/connectedness through community-led approaches

- developing pathways to leadership within communities

- community-led advocacy and mediation

- building capacity within and between providers and communities

- culturally responsive ways of working across all sectors, including business.

Effective philanthropic practices include:

- place-based approaches to strengthen social cohesion in targeted communities

- developing processes for sharing knowledge across the philanthropic sector, to strengthen the sector's cultural capabilities and responsiveness to diverse communities

- working in ways that are data driven to track grantmaking and ensure that funders' approaches/practices are accessible and support inclusion effectively

- supporting grantee organisations to strengthen their responsiveness to diverse communities through, for example, board diversity and culturally responsive service design

- funders working to strengthen their own internal cultural competence across boards and staff – to increase culturally responsive decision-making and ensure that diversity, inclusion and equity feature in a sustained and institutionalised way

- developing effective strategies for communication and outreach to engage more effectively with diverse communities

- funders being transparent about the progress they are making in relation to diversity, inclusion and equity measures.

Considerations for the philanthropic sector

Opportunities to strengthen and extend funding approaches

- Prioritisation of funding to priority population groups and issues within the refugee and migrant context.

- Addressing barriers to funding access for diverse community groups/providers through, for example, offering pre-application funding advice to priority groups.

- Targeted investment in capacity development for providers and communities in the resettlement and settlement sectors.

- Long-term and/or place-based approaches that support community-led development within priority communities.

- Funding innovation to identify new ways of addressing priority issues/challenges.

- Exploring the design of participatory or non-competitive funding models that address sector fragmentation and enable collaboration.

Opportunities to develop targeted non-grantmaking roles, including:

- Understanding evidence of need through data analysis and engagement/outreach with ethnically diverse communities.

- Facilitation and/or convening roles to grow collaboration and strengthen opportunities for regional strategy-setting.

- Developing partnerships and/or communities of practice with other funders/agencies to grow sector capacity.

- Creating a strategic internal focus on building cultural competence and organisational cultural intelligence.

- Brokering conversations between communities, central and local government, and other funders.

- Sharing learning about effective practice cross-sector.

- Individual funders and the wider philanthropic sector working to be transparent about progress on diversity and inclusion.