The social impact of settlement services and policy

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• Settlement services and policy impact on asylum seekers and refugees
• Services and policy are key to successful settlement but there are also other aspects.
• Successful settlement = *feeling at home* that occurs through a process of *place-making*
• It’s not enough to simply provide accommodation. It’s about feeling at home through this process of place making
• Feeling comfortable in your surroundings
Place making

Interactions with community

Interactions with environment

Interactions with services
Unhomeliness

- Unhomeliness = “...a pervasive sense of displacement.”

- Both UK and Australian asylum seekers have reported isolation and experience this ‘unhomeliness’ where networks of support are not in place

- Effectiveness of location is dependent on the degree of social support
Case Study: Great Yarmouth, UK

• Dispersal from London
• Geographical isolation
• Ethnic community isolation
• Housing conditions
Case Study: South Australia

• October 2010: Inverbrackie APOD (Alternative Place of Detention) and announcement of expanded community-based detention.
Unhomeliness

• Hidden secondary homelessness

• Couch surfing is the most common form of homelessness for young people

• “Often homelessness is not identified by the client and so it goes unrecognised” (Couch (2011) A new way home: Refugee young people and homelessness in Australia Journal of Social Inclusion 2(1)).

• How do we address homelessness?
Best Practice: Community support

http://lassn.org.uk/short-stop-post/
• Footscray Community Legal Centre report (Berta 2012):

• Housing issues:
  – Reporting maintenance issues
  – How to avoid bond disputes
  – How a lease can be legally terminated

• Report calls for refugee specific housing support and community education and further research into refugee homelessness.

“An additional concern raised in relation to homelessness amongst refugees, asylum seekers and humanitarian entrants is the lack of a solid evidence base on the nature and extent of homelessness amongst these groups. Targeted research on this issue has been limited to date and much of the evidence gathered by RCOA remains anecdotal.”

Refugee Council of Australia 2012 (SUBMISSION TO THE NSW DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES ON FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR SPECIALIST HOMELESSNESS SERVICES IN NSW)
• So how do we try to address homelessness and assist in the process of place making so that asylum seekers and refugees feel at home?
• We are all implicated in the social impact
• The difficulty is in identifying homelessness
• Often clients won’t relate couch surfing to homelessness
• How do we make a social impact on homelessness?
  • A combined effort
  • Record cases of homelessness
• Services on the front line are uniquely positioned to join forces and document these cases.
• Often a combined effort of Universities and services can be a powerful force in convincing policy makers that this issue must be acted upon.
We all have a role to play in addressing housing issue.
So much time is spent dealing with the issue client to client when we can collectively make headway into addressing this issue.
Keep records
Document the issue
Anonymous
Need to have the data to back up call for greater assistance
Thank you!

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