Heading in the Right Direction

Migrants and Refugees in the AMES Intermediate Labour Market Program

Prepared by AMES Research and Policy Division
October 2009
Intermediate Labour Market Program

Access to work that matches our skills and interests is one of the most powerful drivers for a meaningful and satisfying life. Paid work connects us with our community, is a framework for us to make a valuable contribution to society, and profoundly influences the formation of our identity.

Sustainable employment provides migrants and refugees with the where-with-all to move from the margins to economic participation. It provides dignity and status to those who lost both during protracted and traumatic pre arrival experiences. The model of a working family is very important in the experience of the children of migrants and refugees and contributes significantly to the health and well being of all family members.

It is not surprising therefore that the overwhelming majority of migrants and refugees who participate in all of the programs run by AMES want to get a job as soon as possible after they arrive in Australia.

Some new arrivals need to learn new skills to work in Australia. Many others arrive with professional and vocational skills, good employment records and impressive levels of formal education and training. The potential for these existing skills and experiences to strengthen the Australian economy is enormous. However, most have to find a way to overcome barriers before they can join the workforce in more than a casual way.

Many of these barriers can be addressed if people get a chance to experience an Australian workplace. If on-the-job training is built into their workplace experience, much more can be achieved.

Over the past three years AMES has taken up this challenge. We run a number of transition to work programs to assist new and recent arrivals into work.

A key priority of AMES 2008 – 2010 Strategy is to use our capacity as an employer to provide work opportunities for our clients to demonstrate their skills and to understand how an Australian workplace works.

In 2008 over 80 clients were in transition to mainstream employment as part of our ILM program and we are proud of the many participants who have successfully gone on to jobs after their AMES experience.

Our own organisation is a beneficiary as well. The program proved an excellent vehicle to add to the numbers of AMES staff with direct knowledge and experience of other languages and cultures.

AMES also benefited from a range of other IT, administrative, para professional and professional skills. ILM participants contributed to and improved the service of our Settlement, Education, and Employment services as well as of our Corporate Support division.

This report documents what we learnt during this project in 2008. I trust other employers will find the information both useful and motivating in establishing similar programs for newly arrived migrants and refugees.

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ILM participants
Participants contributed their individual stories, insights into specific barriers to employment, comments on what helped, and their work as employed staff in AMES Education, Employment centres and Corporate Services units.

ILM Manager
Sally Hearn

ILM trainers
Pat McNd, Maureen O’Keefe, Kaye Bishop, Jai Caulfield, Linda Bienke, Pam McKean, Edita Dick, Helen Mulvane

ILM panel members
Sakura Toke from Westall Language Centre, Simona Ruozzi from Auspen Accounting, Han Nguyen from AMES Footscray and Andrew Kalon from Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture motivated ILM participants with their personal stories of finding jobs as migrants and refugees to Australia.

AMES Staff
Site Managers, Workplace Supervisors and many other staff actively supported the ILM participants in AMES Education, Employment and Settlement sites and Corporate Services Units.

Volunteers
Volunteers conducted practice interviews and provided valuable feedback as part of ILM job training.
From AMES
George Tsetinis, Tania Bafunno, Cheryl Winnell, Myra Feldman, Kevin Brown, Samantha Halmoukos, Keni Clarke, Sophie Williams and Gilda Brito.
From the ANZ
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Table of Contents

Introduction 01

Executive summary 04
  1 The ILM program 04
  2 Research findings 05
  3 Recommendations 08

1 Research method – summary 09

2 Employment barriers of migrants and refugees 10

3 Background and establishment 12
  3.1 AMES as an employer of migrants and refugees 12
  3.2 Participants 13
  3.3 Planning 16
  3.4 Resources 16

4 How the ILM addressed barriers 17
  4.1 Pathway planning 17
  4.2 Job search training workshops 19
  4.3 Workplace experiences 21

5 Outcomes 25
  5.1 Employment outcomes 25
  5.2 Other outcomes 25

6 AMES Transition to Work Programs 27

Appendices 28
  1 ILM Evaluation Framework 2008 28
  2 Profiles of ILM participants 31
  3 Literature review 36
1. The ILM program

Conventional ILM programs give those who are most removed from the labour market a bridge back to the world of work by lifting their employability. Their core feature is paid work on a temporary contract – up to 12 months if possible, combined with personal development, vocational training and job search. The target group for a conventional ILM is long term unemployed people who are disengaged from training and employment and have few skills to bring to the job.

In 2008 AMES applied the concept of an intermediate labour market to newly arrived migrants and refugees. This target group is strikingly different to the conventional ILM programs because many migrants and refugees already have skills, employment histories and significant levels of formal education and/or vocational training.

Many are very keen to do more study and training and are intent on getting a job as soon as possible.

But migrants and refugees have the odds stacked against them when they try to get a job, so AMES created short term, real jobs – an intermediate labour market – inside AMES. These jobs put migrants and refugees into an Australian workplace that well understands the challenges they face.

In the AMES workplace they learn and rehearse ways to get through employment barriers, surrounded by many co-workers who have succeeded in the same quest. Barriers relate to their command of English, cultural knowledge of the Australian workplace including how and where to find jobs, and workplace communication skills. In the ILM migrants and refugees can develop personal and technical skills, and demonstrate their existing skills.

ILM Approaches

**AQTF Traineeships**

These were usually 12 months long and combined accredited training with extended workplace experience. This allowed participants to apply existing skills and learn new vocational skills in a workplace.

**Three month placements**

These placements were for refugees and migrants from professional and para-professional backgrounds. They were placed for three months in AMES workplaces, to demonstrate existing skills and to get local work experience so they could move into jobs that matched their skills levels.

Both approaches had three key elements: supervision in a real job; feedback and experience of an Australian workplace.

Participants were mainly skilled professional and para-professionals drawn from other AMES programs. A small number had little formal education and few immediately relevant skills for the Australian workplace. These participants worked in AMES Catering and Cleaning Social Enterprises.

2. Research findings

**Employment barriers identified by participants**

Participants were asked about what they thought was stopping them get the jobs they wanted. They said:

- English skills, especially speaking and listening, and basic social conversation
- Inability to talk about their skills and experience even when they know they have them
- Workplace communication, specifically telephone and email communication
- Lack of relevant Australian work experience
- How and where to find jobs
- Behavioural style interviews
- Qualifications alone are not enough to get a job
- Diminishing confidence over time.

**Preparatory programs**

The research confirmed the contribution of programs like the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) and the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP) that prepare migrants and refugees for participation in ILM programs. These programs can:

- Introduce the idea of pathway planning and how to use it
- Provide early and ongoing vocational counselling
- Help people describe existing employment skills and experience
- Build knowledge of particular industries where these skills and experience can be put to use
- Identify and fill gaps in skills, particularly those related to communication skills
- Form employment pathways to specific employment destinations
- Set up as many rehearsals as possible so participants can confidently talk about and use their skills and experience in a workplace.

**Supervision**

Workplace supervisors are critical to the quality and success of each participant’s experience in the ILM. Therefore workplace supervisors must get support and training to carry out their supervision well.

**Work trials**

ILM participants now in employment with AMES had the time and opportunity to convince us about their skills and abilities on the job. Managers got to know the person’s capabilities and their “fit” with a team or workplace. Their work trials led directly to employment.

**There is clearly attention to detail. This comes from the need to impress and do the best you can. Knowledge transfer has also occurred where Sandra has used her previous experience to provide advice in areas such as branding and direct marketing.**

Ahmed Yusuf, AMES Manager Communications (2008)
Mentors
Not all ILM participants had a mentor, but those who did rated the mentor’s contribution highly because the mentor gave them:
• One on one support from someone who understands how to apply for a job, and how Australian industries recruit staff
• Confidence and motivation
• Honest feedback about what was going wrong with job search approaches
• Help to write resumes, cover letters and prepare for interviews.

Job interviews: playing by the rules
Participants gave us this important insight – in Australia, job interviews often focus on behaviours, rather than technical skills. This is neither their past experience nor what they expect in Australia.
Why should we employ you? What strengths do you bring to the organisation? Are you a self starter?
These are common Australian interview questions. When ILM participants prepared answers ahead of time they were much more confident in the interview.
Feedback on unsuccessful interview performance, practice of interview techniques, and preparation of illustrations to prove skill and experience were all very helpful.

In Australia there is much less emphasis on your technical skills. It is much more about your behaviour. For example in India the emphasis in your resume is on your qualifications – the first page is all qualifications, your grades, scores, percentages of your results. At the interview about 80% are questions about your behaviour – like ‘How would you handle this situation?’ or ‘How would you improve your skills?’
Charul Goyal, ILM participant

Most effective assistance identified by participants
After finishing their placement in AMES, a sample of participants were interviewed about what they thought had helped them most.
Some people interviewed had found a job, others were still looking. Participants said the following were very effective in helping them:
• Mentors
• Identification of their skills
• Practice at talking about their skills
• Workplace experience and feedback
• Opportunity to demonstrate existing skills
• Job search information and skills
• Job interview practice
• Authentic context for learning and practice
• Concept of employment pathway planning.

Workplace experiences
In AMES workplaces participants saw what standards of behaviour were expected in an Australian workplace for themselves – punctuality, when to be formal or informal, how to follow policies and procedures, how to get clarification, and different management styles.
They:
• Learnt personal organisation, time management skills, computer and IT skills, and how to get on well with a work team
• Received feedback from workplace supervisors that was appreciated and seen by participants as very helpful
• Found the chance to use and demonstrate existing skills was highly motivating and good for their confidence.

Rehearsal
Many participants told AMES they had ‘done’ job search training but still struggled to put together a comprehensive resume or pull off a confident interview performance.
Training and information are just the first steps. Turning participants into confident applicants for a job takes time and practice.
Migrants and refugees have to front up to second language interviews that take place in an unfamiliar culture. This hurdle frustrates them deeply – because they know that once in the job they will perform well and quickly learn new systems and skills.
Rehearsal in advance leads to a better performance on the day.

Job searches
Chances of employment increased when participants:
• Moved from a vague plan – or no plan at all – to naming short and longer term goals
• Limited their search to one industry or one field of work
• Learnt how to adapt a resume to different selection criteria
• Applied a stepping stone approach to long term goals
• Got better at talking up their own skills in relation to a particular job.
3. Recommendations

Policy
AMES recommends that:
1. All levels of government consider offering work experience opportunities to new and recently arrived migrants and refugees.
2. By establishing an incentive scheme, government would encourage and support employers to provide work experience placements for new and recently arrived migrants and refugees.
3. A proactive communications campaign promoting the business benefits of cultural diversity and business and industry’s role in social inclusion would advance government policy in this area.
4. A new, short-term and targeted employment program that assists all skilled and family stream migrants into their field of expertise/vocation is provided. It would feature:
   - Immediate on arrival access
   - Cultural orientation and mentoring
   - Career guidance.
5. Language programs for new and recently arrived migrants and refugees who are seeking work include an explicit vocational component including work experience.

Employers
AMES recommends to employers who establish and conduct ILM programs that:

Transitional Roles
1. A heavy emphasis on the goal of transition to other positions, internally or externally, is clearly and extensively communicated within the organisation, and maintained throughout work placements.
2. The transitional role is a real position.

Duration
The duration of the transitional position should be specified and time limited with:
- Shorter placements (e.g. 3 months) recommended for those with existing para-professional, professional skills, good English and who need local Australian work experience
- A longer placement (up to 12 months) for those needing to develop technical skills and achieve growth in their confidence, language competence and employability skills.

Recruitment and Selection
4. Work placements are a good match with the employee’s skills and experience and a good fit with business needs.
5. Recruitment processes allow for lack of knowledge and experience of Australian workplaces.
6. Direct line managers and supervisors have decision-making power in regard to final selection.

Effective Assistance
7. Successful applicants receive more direct and planned guidance than regular employees – in areas such as skills development, awareness and rehearsal of workplace language and behaviours, resume preparation, job search and interview skills.
8. Successful applicants have support from a mentor who can build confidence and motivation, understand how to communicate about the application and interview process in their industry, and gives honest and direct feedback on workplace behaviour and past failures to get work.

Management
9. Work contracts meet conventional standards, e.g. when reviews will take place, how and when the program will be judged and what outcomes are expected.
10. Honest and constructive feedback is given on workplace performance.

Supervision
11. Workplace supervisors have sufficient training and skills, time to integrate the role into their full time responsibilities, and management support to achieve consistent and high quality supervision.

1. Research method – summary

Research Aim
To identify how and to what extent the AMES ILM model addresses barriers to sustainable employment and supports AMES clients and other newly arrived refugees and migrants transition to work in the mainstream labour market.

ILM Evaluation Framework
In 2008 AMES created a comprehensive evaluation framework for the ILM program. The framework is designed to identify the groups most likely to benefit from the ILM, what elements of the program best support their transition to sustained mainstream employment, and to what extent the ILM helps with settlement. It recognises that managers, trainers, supervisors and participants are all crucial contributors to the effectiveness of the program.

The framework will help AMES investigate how newly arrived and longer term refugees and migrants can get existing skills and experience recognised as a basis for employment. Analysis of ILM processes, activities, impacts and outcomes can be used as grounds to urge government and other employers to employ ILM graduates.

See Appendix 1 for details of the ILM Evaluation Framework.

Data collection
Throughout 2008 AMES kept detailed records of:
- Interviews with all participants on entry to the program, mid way through the program and with a sample group after they left the program
- Feedback from trainers during the program
- Formal interviews with two trainers at the end of the program
- Written survey of workplace supervisors and managers during the program
- Face to face feedback from managers during the program, prior to commencement of new 3 month intake.

Literature review and analysis
International
A key component of the applied research methodology was to understand the significant amount of international documentation available. This included a review of the New Deal for Communities (NDC) policy in the UK as well as comprehensive international surveys by Finn and Simmonds that cover ILMs in Europe, the UK and the USA. The key findings can be found in Appendix 3 of this report.

Australian
AMES has also reviewed results of the Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) ILM project alongside specific Victorian research and analysis by the Refugee Health Research Centre at La Trobe University.
AMES also relied on outcomes from its collaborative project with the New and Emerging Skills Unit in the Victorian Office of Training and Tertiary Education. See Appendix 3 for details.

Analysis
This material allowed AMES to identify common themes that allowed us to:
- consider design and development strategies
- identify key characteristics of successful ILMs
- compare the AMES ILM program with international best practice.

Please see Appendix 3 for details.
2. Employment barriers for migrants and refugees

The conventional barriers to employment for migrants and refugees are frequently cited as lack of English, no local work experience and qualifications that are not recognised for work in Australia.

New and recently arrived migrants and refugees say that lack of relevant local work experience is one of the biggest barriers to employment. Under-employment is another – i.e. working in a job that does not match their skills and experience.

Many participants in the 2008 ILM program had good or reasonable English and the majority had some local workplace experience. Many had overseas qualifications that were recognised or acquired in Australia.

Almost all had patterns of short term, casual work in a range of (often un-related) fields. The majority had not moved beyond this kind of employment to secure on-going work.

Interviews with participants revealed that some were frustrated by not being able to utilise existing skills and experience, particularly those from professional or skilled backgrounds.

Others had no specific employment goal and were prepared to do ‘any job’ – they were frustrated by less secure, casual work and wanted sustained, on going or long term contract work.

Interviews with the participants, their trainers and workplace supervisors revealed that barriers to sustainable employment are usually complex, subtle and concurrent. Some barriers are personal (i.e. to do with the individual) and some exist within the external environment.

The barrier may be as straightforward as not knowing what jobs are available, how to find them and how to apply.

Victorian research in 2008 described barriers facing refugees who attempt to enter the labour market in Australia. These include:

• Recent arrival
• Discrimination
• Low English language skills
• Lack of education and training
• Lack of local market knowledge
• Poor access to formal and informal employment networks
• Poor provision of advice (including guidance and training)
• Cultural transition
• Pre arrival experiences.

Commonly the qualifications and skills of newly arrived refugees are not recognised, or are not transferable to Australian workplaces. AMES documented barriers faced by skilled migrants in accessing employment in a study undertaken in 2004 for the Victorian Office of Training and Tertiary Education. Major barriers were lack of understanding of Australian business culture and lack of good communication skills, particularly networking and interview skills. Many professional migrants lacked practical skills for job seeking and had unrealistic expectations of the job seeking process. Lack of local work experience was highlighted as a barrier by migrants and employers alike.

Presentation and intelligibility were also cited as major barriers for some migrants.

To break through employment barriers, migrants and refugees need nuanced advice and experience, tailored to their individual circumstances, and at different stages along the way.

The greatest barrier was low confidence. Many migrants had unsuccessful and demoralising experiences, particularly those who came with a belief that their skills were in short supply and getting a job would be easy. They had great difficulty marketing themselves to employers. When marketing oneself is culturally alien the problem is compounded.

A 2008 investigation into reasons why overseas professionals have high levels of unemployment, showed that cultural differences put migrants at a disadvantage in job interviews.

Australian cultural values of independence, practicality, forthrightness that make us gregarious self-starters that shoot from the hip, won’t necessarily be reflected in the overseas candidates that the employers are interviewing. Whereas they may have come from a collective, hierarchical, symbolic society that respects authority, and is waiting to be shown some guidance from their management. A practical example – ‘Well I mean, the most common answer is no answer at all, a nervous grin or a smile, that the candidate not actually knowing how to answer that question. ‘Where do you want to be in five years?’ for example. An Australian candidate may explicitly go out and state their goals. It may be seen by an Asian candidate to be quite boastful and inappropriate with somebody of a more senior rank than them. They’ll be looking for guidance from that person and they’ll be quite self-deprecating and unassuming in the way they’ll respond. So they won’t actually know how to answer the question.’

A number of AMES ILM participants experienced similar difficulties in both real and practice job interviews. To break through employment barriers, migrants and refugees need nuanced advice and experience, tailored to their individual circumstances, and at different stages along the way.

Barriers are not limited to the attributes of the applicants; clearly some barriers emanate from the employers (and sometimes co workers) and may include ethnocentrism, prejudice and stereotyping, and more tractable factors such as lack of inter-cultural knowledge, discomfort and embarrassment about how to deal with people from other cultures.

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2. AMES Research and Learning Innovation Unit October 2004 Addressing employability: Interventions in the AMES Employment Skills Centre. Report prepared for the New and Emerging Skills Unit, OTTE.
3. Background and establishment

3.1 AMES as an employer of migrants and refugees

AMES has a significant number of employees from migrant and refugee backgrounds. In 2008, AMES staff came from 73 different language backgrounds. In part, this is the result of a deliberate strategy to employ staff with the same language and cultural background as the clients so that a better service can be delivered.

Examples include the bilingual Education trainees program operating since 2001 and the AMES Community Guide program since 2005, which has over 170 Guides, from 28 different countries, who speak 55 languages.

In 2008 AMES used its own capacity as an employer to run an intermediate labour market program for clients specifically to address their barriers to employment. Participants from a range of programs were appointed to positions in AMES.

Objectives of the ILM program at AMES

Specific objectives of the AMES Intermediate Labour Market are to:

- Create opportunities within AMES for newly arrived migrants and refugees to get a first opportunity in an Australian workplace via traineeships, work experience and other paid employment
- Skill participants for post-AMES positions
- Use the ILM program as a transition to mainstream employment
- Demonstrate that migrants and refugees without prior experience of Australian workplaces make a contribution to workplaces.

3.2 Participants

81 people participated in the Intermediate Labour Market during 2008. They were recruited from AMES Settlement, Education and Employment programs including AMEP, LLNP, Skilled Professional Migrants program and AMES Community Guides program.

Participants had vastly different:

- Spoken and written English skills
- Vocational skills, ranging from professionally qualified to those with few skills that match current Australian labour market requirements
- Knowledge of Australian labour markets and how to access jobs
- Workforce participation overseas and in Australia.

AMES ILM participants worked as Settlement Information Officers, Employment Consultants, Customer Service/Administration Officers, and in Corporate Services positions in Finance, Human Resources, Marketing, Risk and Corporate Governance, Information Systems and Facilities. A number undertook work based traineeships in AMES Hospitality and Cleaning Social Enterprises. Many of the positions required the use of first language as part of the job.

Summary profiles of each group are at Appendix 2.

Contracts ranged from three to 12 months. Participants had formal position descriptions and performance plans, were assigned workplace supervisors, participated in staff training and team meetings where possible, and thus did real jobs in an Australian workplace.

Table 1 shows the inputs and principal activities of the ILM.

Table 1 – AMES Intermediate Labour Market

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positions</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Concurrent Qualification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Settlement Information Officers (SEOs)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12 mth AMES traineeship</td>
<td>Certificate III in Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Officers (EOs)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12 mth AMES traineeship</td>
<td>Certificate III in Employment Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Assistants</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12 mth AQTF traineeship</td>
<td>Certificate III in Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Assistants (Traineeships)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12 mth AQTF traineeship</td>
<td>Certificate III in Office Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Enterprises</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12 mth AQTF traineeship</td>
<td>Certificate III in Hospitality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Service/Administration Officers</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3 mth contract</td>
<td>Certificate III in Asset Maintenance (Cleaning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Support positions</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3 mth contract</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 Participants in the Corporate Support positions came into the ILM from AMES Skilled Professional Migrants Program and had already had their tertiary qualifications assessed by the Overseas Qualifications Unit.
3.2 Participants
The following stories of six participants demonstrate the diversity of people in AMES ILM program.

Caleb Haunung arrived in Melbourne in mid-2000 as a refugee from Burma. He has an Associate Diploma in Electrical Engineering and worked as an electrician on building sites in Malaysia before arriving in Melbourne. He enrolled in AMEP classes at AMES Footscray and later on in Certificate NEIS and Diploma of Interpreting, both at RMIT. Caleb is a very active member of the Chin community and President of the Chin Association. He does a lot of volunteer work helping to settle on-arrival families. His first job was as a casual Community Service Attendant at Sunshine Hospital. He went on to Certificate III in Hospitality and went on to complete a Certificate III in Tourism (Spanish). Caleb was able to use his communication, presentation and IT skills to set up a Profit and Loss statement – a skill which he found useful in establishing a business.

Manjula Devi Ramesh arrived in Melbourne in 2008. She completed a BA in Sociology in India and worked for a chain of 5 star hotels in India as a Guest Relation Executive (Front Office) where she handled reservations, arranged tours and managed other staff to ensure very high levels of customer service. Accordingly she had strong communication skills, as well as developed computer skills and was experienced in leading her work team. She has returned to Nepal to care for her sick mother and has decided to return to India when the disease is under control.

Sonal Samant arrived in Melbourne in 2006. She completed a B.A in Sociology in India and worked for a chain of 5 star hotels in India as a Guest Relation Executive (Front Office) where she handled reservations, arranged tours and managed other staff to ensure very high levels of customer service. Accordingly she had strong communication, presentation and IT skills. Her first job was as a home cleaner in Oakleigh AMES Centre. Later on she was employed as a accounts assistant at Magic Green Cleaning and is the current ILM by Magic Green Cleaning and is a Secretary at the Victoria Community and Cultural Centre. Sonal has completed many courses since arriving in Melbourne including Certificate III in Community Services and Certificate II in Community Services.

Nymphom Chauven is a 26 year old Sudanese woman with 8 years of formal education. She came to Australia in 2001 as a refugee with few vocational skills and little English. She filed a claim for asylum with one child. After completing her AMEP at Dandenong, Nymphom joined the Magic Green Cleaning Company in 2007 as a trainee and now runs her own business.

Nyshom Chaweg is a 26 year old Sudanese woman with 8 years of formal education. She came to Australia in 2001 as a refugee with few vocational skills and little English. She filed a claim for asylum with one child.

In 2006 – 2007 Nyshom did a Certificate II in Hospitality and went on to Certificate III in Hospitality in the Social Enterprise program at AMES as part of the ILM program. As part of this training Nyshom did work placements at the Kensington Primary School Canteen and with the Sungkim Sateen catering enterprise in Caulfield. Nyshom now works as a Food Service Attendant at Sunrise Hospital.

Gak Deng Woul arrived in Australia in May 2007 after spending 2 years in Egypt after fleeing the war in Sudan. His first step was to get his qualifications recognised and this led to his enrolment in Tourism studies at Swinburne University in 2008. After completing his Certificate III in Tourism he went on to complete a Certificate IV in Community Services.

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3.3 Planning

The planning process for the ILM envisaged employment opportunities that would:
- Use the skills and experience of our clients to fill vacancies where clients have or can reasonably develop these skills
- Improve our services by using staff from client communities more widely in areas such as service delivery that uses clients’ first language
- Investigate and implement ways to employ recruits including traineeships, contract and sessional opportunities, and work experience
- Make sure work experience was rigorous and supported, to prepare people for positions with other employers
- Create transitional positions so that ‘first employment’ opportunities are continuously available.

3.4 Resources

Management and coordination

Management and coordination was stitched into every relevant area of AMES.
At the most senior executive level the General Manager Settlement and General Manager Community and Policy had oversight of the ILM project.
Business Unit Managers had responsibility at the local level for the work and supervision of ILM participants.

A fulltime ILM Manager was appointed to identify positions in AMES that could be productively used as part of the ILM; identify and match clients to these positions; support ILM participants, managers and workplace supervisors throughout the program; arrange job search training and support participants’ transitions to work; identify external employment opportunities; and build relationships with industry mentors and employers.
The ILM Manager also carried out intensive case management to prepare and support participants in their search for employment on exit from the ILM.

Implementation

A forum for managers

47 managers came to a half day forum early in 2008 to make sure they had a common understanding of ILM goals, draw them into decision making and get their commitment. Managers had to be committed if the program was to succeed.

Senior managers introduced the objectives of the program using illustrations from the genesis of the ILM concept in the UK and how the Brotherhood of St Laurence applied the concept in Australia. They emphasised the transitional intention of the ILM and the need for a very deliberate job search component to be built into the program. A staff panel described other AMES transition to work initiatives, on which the ILM would build.

Managers brainstormed how to best train workplace supervisors and mentors for their roles in the program. They raised questions and concerns about:
- The need for adequate support and resourcing of workplace supervisors and mentors, including recognition of extra time needed on top of full time jobs
- How continuous vacating of positions can be exhausting for the team – you just get a person up to speed and then they leave
- Language barriers that get in the way of a person’s ability to do the job
- How to find the right mentors and the potential for mentoring via inter-departmental relationships
- How much involvement the managers would have in selection and recruitment processes.

Two workshops for workplace supervisors

Existing workplace supervisors were designated to work with ILM participants at each worksite. Their commitment was essential too. ILM workplace supervisors came to the first workshop. It had a similar format to the managers’ forum, designed to create shared understanding and commitment. The focus then moved to their role via perspectives from a current workplace supervisor. They wanted professional development on how to give constructive feedback, and some had concerns about the time needed to supervise ILM participants in addition to existing duties.
The second workshop, with 38 supervisors, addressed these issues in detail and gave them practical strategies.

4. How the ILM addressed barriers

4.1 Pathway planning

The ILM goal of transition to mainstream employment was emphasised with participants at the outset and at all stages of their employment period.

Initial interviews showed that few had specific employment goals. They had tried to find sustainable jobs by using fairly ad hoc approaches.
Most participants had found some casual work through family friends or community networks. Some used unfocussed job search methods. Some knew about resumes, formal applications and interviews but had no practical skills or experience to help them tackle these tasks.
The large number of Certificates II and III they held collectively was noteworthy. Sometimes an individual held qualifications in unrelated areas – retail and aged care for example. Frequently the person had not used the qualification to pursue work in that field.

Employment Pathways Planning Session

The ILM job search training program started with an employment pathways planning session – a half day workshop attended by 53 participants. Because it was held in May 2008 participants who began three month placements later in the year did not attend. To fill this gap they had informal conversations about pathways with the ILM manager.
The training aimed to:
- Introduce the concept of employment pathway planning
- Help each person to identify skills, abilities and gaps in relation to employment goals
- Begin planning for individual employment pathways
The session began with an explanation of the basic goals of the ILM and encouragement to:
- Attend training offered (e.g computer skills training)
- Observe workplace communication and behaviours
- Practise and improve workplace communication skills
- Demonstrate existing skills wherever possible
- Build a resume with specific Australian experience and referee/s
- Be part of the work team
- Develop transferable skills other than first language skills
- Seek advice and feedback from the workplace supervisor
- Foster relationships with other staff members, particularly one who could act as a mentor.

This situated the ILM placement as part of a larger plan for participants.
How to identify employment pathways

A qualified AMES Vocational Counsellor took the group through two scenarios to demonstrate how to identify: skills from previous experience and work history, and short term and long term goals.

A group activity looked at jobs in computing, business, languages, and community services industry sectors, and the training and experience needed to work at different levels in them. Industry sectors matched the broad areas of skill, experience and employment interests of participants. Then participants were grouped with their trainers to identify:

• Two jobs they would like
• Skills needed for the jobs
• Skills they already had
• Gaps they needed to fill in to get the jobs.

They took away a list of useful websites for career planning, and skills identification quizzes.

Voices of experience

A panel of four migrants and refugees who had successfully found jobs talked about their job search experience and how they had worked towards their employment aspirations. They were a mix of professional to semi skilled workers from Italy, Ghana, Vietnam and Burma.

Their presentations deeply interested the ILM participants who asked many questions about differences in Australian workplaces compared to their home countries. Answers to these questions showed that the panel:

• Were surprised by different management styles and expectations in Australia
• Saw English as essential to getting and keeping a good job
• Had found it very hard to get a 'real' job without local experience

They urged the audience to adjust expectations if that got them a foot in the door, and to take advantage of any vacancies. Although this can be very hard, they must keep motivated in the search and be energetic in interviews.

Participant feedback

The concept of employment pathway planning as a way into the job market was new for the majority of participants. From their comments (below) it was clear that this was an essential first step in shifting the job search from haphazard to intentional and organised.

The comments below came from the evaluation of this session.

| This is the first time for me to think about pathways | I need to do planning and organising for myself |
| Gave me ideas on where I want to travel in the next 4 years and set my goal | I didn’t (know) this planning system before so it was very helpful |
| Identified my skill gaps such as time management skills and IT skills and admin – short term training in relevant areas | It is now clear for me how to draw my pathways, how to focus on one or two goals instead of jumping in different organisations |
| After this meeting I became more confident about my skills | Start with your goals, the skills you are good at, then direction |
| Now I can go towards my long term goal and not get off track | How to recognise the skills I have and how to get a point for identifying employment pathways |

From listening to the panel stories I understand about how to plan my future pathway

I’ll start by having short term goals such as working as a community worker or employment consultant to get a better chance

I can get some ideas to plan about my goal and walk step by step to that door

4.2 Job search training workshops

The second component of the ILM job search training was 5.5 days of intensive workshops held between July and October 2008. Each participant got a copy of Finding a Job: A guide to successful job seeking (AMES 2004) as a reference material and background to the training.

• Differences between working in Australia and other countries
• Action words – presenting strengths/how to sell themselves to employer
• Recognise achievements
• Interview process – playing the game
• Different ways to get a job
• Employer expectations
• The steps of the job application process
• Achievement exercises and how to do them (quantifying achievements)
• Making us independent

They said they understood between 50% and 90% of the content. Those who understood 90% of the content said they could only apply about 70% of the information to their own job search.

This tells us that there is a significant gap between getting information and using it to develop confident behaviour. Migrants and refugees need time to rehearse/practice job search approaches and steps in the process. This was borne out in the mock interviews.
The resume workshop (one session)
The session focused on what to put in a resume, how to detail qualifications and work history, and how to describe competencies and key achievements.

Each person wrote a good basic resume which could be adapted to particular positions as they applied for them. Experienced AMES staff worked with individuals to write their resume. The trainer stressed that each person had to be able to talk confidently about the details in their resume. Participants rated the following as their most useful insights from the workshop:

- What to put into a resume
- Tips to write relevant resumes
- Tailoring the resume to a specific job
- Realising the resume is not as good as previously thought
- How to make an impact on your resume.

The job search process (2 sessions)
The first session covered:

- Where to look for jobs and different methods of job searching
- How to register, search and apply for jobs online (e.g. through seek.com)
- Structure and meaning of job advertisements
- How to interpret what the employer wants
- How to address key selection criteria
- Ways to organise paper work
- Effective time management
- The Job Guide as a source of correct language to describe job titles and duties
- Follow up to applications.

To prepare for the second session participants had to apply for a minimum of three jobs using the job search process described in the workshop. Paper work – application, resume, statement addressing key selection criteria and cover letter – were used to prepare for the mock workshop.

Most useful parts of the session were noted by participants as:

- Cover letter, resume, key selection criteria
- Ten things not to do at an interview (video)
- Achievements
- STAR* written on cue cards.
- Tips for interviews – how to back up claims
- Finding out that you can’t rely on qualifications alone to secure a job – the belief that if you have the qualifications then the employer will just give you the job.

Preparing for an interview
In an interview people must be able to:

- Talk about their skills and experience comprehensively and convincingly
- Respond quickly to interview questions by learning to anticipate questions and preparing responses
- Convince an interviewer that they really want the job
- Follow instructions and ask for clarification
- Manage personal presentation and punctuality
- Use effective personal communication styles

For the second session each participant came prepared for three mock interviews with different panels. The panels were made up of volunteers from AMES and ANZ staff. Participants got immediate feedback on their performance and one-on-one coaching as follow up. This proved to be a very challenging exercise for participants because the volunteer interviewers were rigorous in the interview and with their feedback.

Feedback addressed lack of punctuality, poor presentation including a perceived lack of enthusiasm or energy, inability to speak clearly and confidently to the resume, poor understanding of the relevant industry, and failing to read the body language of the interviewer e.g. not picking up cues to stop speaking.

Reverse marketing (one session)
This session covered the concept of reverse marketing, cold canvassing, phone introductions, preparing selling points, and overcoming employer objections. Following up the interviews each participant prepared a short three minute snapshot of themselves and their employment interests. They practiced this until they had a fluent delivery.

Job search closure (one session)
The final session revised and evaluated the program. Participants asked questions and clarified any aspects of the program. Each participant was encouraged to outline their next step in the process as a practical way to move to independent job search.

4.3 Workplace experiences

The following section gives a snapshot of experiences the ILM participants had at work in various AMES workplaces.

Settlement Information

Settlement Information Officers (SIOs) were appointed to AMES Education and Settlement sites where they worked under supervision of the case coordinator, Education Unit Manager or nominated staff member. They attended formal training one day a week.

Settlement Information Officers (SIOs) supply settlement information in first language to refugee and humanitarian entrants in Melbourne. The SIO runs information sessions at AMES centres and in the community. Their tasks are to:

- Research settlement topics such as health, home safety, and public transport
- Give presentations in first languages for newly arrived refugee and humanitarian communities
- Provide settlement information in the home/on exit from IHSS program
- Assist in/conduct client interviews at centres
- Conduct cultural awareness training within AMES and to external clients
- Research and develop settlement information resource materials in a range of formats including text/visual/digital
- Undertake administrative tasks and use relevant computer applications such as Microsoft office

During the ILM placement Settlement Information Officers performed a range of tasks depending on the site:

- Resource development
- Delivery of information sessions
- Translation and interpretation for guest speakers delivering information sessions
- Organisation of community consultations
- Assistance in classrooms

SIOs had regular contact with their supervisors, Education Unit Managers and trainer. They prepared a monthly report of their activities submitted online to the Manager Settlement Services. One had a volunteer tutor who assisted with her pronunciation.

SIOs helped in a resource development project with the AMES Resourcing and Learning Innovation Unit. Two co-presented at an external IT conference on their photo stories and 2 others joined a resource development project with the Legal Service Board and Footscray Legal Service.

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*STAR: Situation, Task, Action, Result. An approach to giving a clear and specific example to demonstrate a skill or experience. Briefly describe the situation and the task.

Explain what you did and what the response or result was.
Cleaning Enterprise
In the Magic Green Cleaning Company there were Contract Work Specifications that the participants had to meet:
- 100% compliance to relevant industry regulations
- Fill in Cleaning Communication Book
- Ensure care and maintenance of cleaning equipment
- Report damage and maintenance requirements to AMES and
- Ensure safe storage of equipment, stock and cleaning agents.
The Supervisor explained that punctuality, good customer relations and good cleaning are the three most important aspects of the work. He emphasised high quality in customer service, good team work, time management and organisational skills, how to work quickly and safety, punctuality and reliability, good communication skills, flexibility to perform a range of different tasks, and ability to stay calm in difficult situations or under work pressure.
Participants learnt both on the job and at a half day per week training session with their workplace supervisor and/or industry trainer. This was highly contextualised training especially for those with low literacy skills; for example, filling in pay claim forms, understanding product labels, filling in the communications log, and OH&S related to particular workplaces.

Catering Enterprise
In the Catering Enterprise participants did food preparation, safe food handling and customer service, under supervision, and an occupational health and safety module related to the hospitality workplace.

Education
Education Assistants worked in classes to support teachers by providing bilingual support, information and support to students.
- explained learning tasks
- explained methodology
- assisted with literacy practice for very low level or beginner level students
- supported small groups in the Independent Learning Centre (ILC) and computer room
- provided information to teachers about issues gleaned from learner’s comments

A particularly valuable task was assisting in development of bilingual materials for beginner level students for use in the ILC.
Education Assistants also assisted at Orientation Sessions, Bilingual Information Sessions, interpreting at initial interviews and referrals.

They did administrative support tasks including:
- Data entry
- Contact with ‘no shows’ and those who withdrew
- Compilation of student assessment task folios

Tasks varied according to client needs, individual strengths and abilities and staff suggestions. For example one younger Education Assistant was placed at a secondary Language Centre and he assisted students with the Retail and Computer modules for the vocational part of their Vocational Training.

Administration and Customer Service
The workplace experiences varied for each person in the different locations. In general the ILM participants had opportunities to undertake a broad range of tasks and use many of their existing skills, particularly IT and computer skills, administrative skills, customer service skills and communication skills.

Participants:
- Provided customer service and general office support services including reception, word processing, spreadsheet, stores and registry related services
- Processed and maintained client applications and records on the AMEP and LLNP information systems, including data entry and retrieval
- Liaised with staff at community venues to maintain accurate class records for these venues
- Assisted in the provision of information to clients on routine matters
- Assisted with production of flyers, brochures and course information
- Maintained library and ILC resources using the Bookmark software system
- Attended and participated in staff team meetings.

Participants said that opportunities to take and make business related phone calls and send emails were particularly useful for people who had not had this experience in an Australian workplace before.

In my country I couldn’t do anything, couldn’t make any decision without the Manager’s approval. Even sending a letter. Here I use a template and send the letter directly.
Charul Goyal ILM participant

Corporate Services
Participants had individual position descriptions relevant to the corporate support area in which they were placed. Workplace supervisors were asked to provide opportunities for ILM participants to use their previous expertise and knowledge. These were in:
- Accounting
- Administration
- Computer and IT
- Organisation and supervision
- Human resources,

We meet for fortnightly and she was able to tell me about the kinds of jobs that matched my experience, helped me redo my CV in the Australian way and told me about a training program at VECCI on Australian employment laws which was really helpful for me.
Charul Goyal, ILM participant

In most cases participants worked in a similar area to their area of expertise but at a lower skills level than they had previously. At interview they reported being very happy with this as it was the local experience they most wanted and valued. Specifically they:
- Staffed the IT Help Desk
- Maintained an IT work log
- Resolved hardware and software problems in head office
- Used the finance system for accounts payable
- Used finance system to raise invoices
- Maintained central files
- Maintained General Manager’s diary
- Circulated agendas for General Managers’ meetings
- Arranged police checks and checked staff qualifications
- Updated Human resources database
- Helped organise special projects e.g. a women’s camp.

She is well connected and respected in her community and has developed a good understanding of the Australian workplace culture. Her impact on her community has been nothing short of phenomenal. She has been able to give out advice to her community when needed as well as positively contribute to site KPIs.
Ionu Fakhri, AMES Employment Unit Manager, Werribee
5. Outcomes

There were many outcomes from the ILM program; qualitative and quantitative outcomes, personal outcomes for individuals and learnings for AMES. The principal outcomes are described below.

5.1 Employment outcomes

Six Settlement Information Officers had mainstream employment in 2009. Five had a mix of 1–3 year contracts for part time and full time work. One worked as a part time casual.

Four Employment Officers were employed in 2009 – one full time contract, one casual, one full time, and one part time.

Five enterprise workers had employment as casual part time cooks (2), casual food preparation assistants (2), and a casual cleaner.

Eleven of those who worked in corporate support positions had employment in 2009 – as a full time receptionist, full time staff of an IT Help Desk, casual market strategist, full time customer service, full time in administration (2), part time book keeper, full time receptionist, full time accounts administration, self employed small business owner, and full time network systems engineer.

Three who worked in AMES Administration and Customer Service ILM positions were employed by that division in 2009 in one part time and two full time positions.

Two Education Assistants were employed full time – one as a Multicultural Education Aide, the other as a Bilingual Assistant.

5.2 Other outcomes

Further study outcomes

A small number of the ILM participants have gone on to further study. Courses include: Certificate IV in Business Administration, librarian course at TAFE, CPA qualification, Master of Business Management, Graduate Diploma in TESOL, and a range of interpreting and translation courses to achieve NAATI accreditation.

Knowledge and experience of Australian workplace cultures

Participants who secured employment after their ILM placement were asked at follow up interviews to name key workplace experiences in AMES ILM that prepared or assisted them. They named:

• Identify and talk about one’s own skills
• Computer skills development and practice
• Meeting people in the workplace, both existing staff members and ILM employees working in other areas of AMES
• Training related directly to the work they were doing
• Opportunities to practice written English and get feedback/correction by, for example, emailing staff members with whom they had formed a ‘mentor like’ relationship
• The degree of autonomy in the workplace was unfamiliar to some; i.e. the expectation to manage one’s own work and time
• Information about and practice in Australian workplace behaviours, for example:
  – One SIO said that he knew he had to phone in about absences but didn’t know what to say
  – How to give and record messages
  – Feedback and correction
  – Expectations around punctuality

Transferable skills

IT skills are highly transferable and a basic requirement in many jobs at all levels. For those who had done a lot of computer work during the ILM, strengthening IT skills was one of the most positive contributions to improved employability. For example, because the SIO job involved preparing presentations on settlement topics, internet searches, PowerPoint, Word and Excel were taught and practised throughout the year.

The trainer introduced Wiki as an online assessment tool. Participants kept weekly online journals and upload these to the Wiki site as part of their work and assessment. The two quietest members of the group became really active on line. They were also two of the participants who had begun with very low level computer skills. All participants had achieved confident levels of competency by the end of the ILM placement.

Employment

The Employment Division used a very structured model consistently across all work locations. Employment Officers (EOs) had position descriptions, performance plans, ongoing feedback, were full-time, attended staff training and staff meetings. They were matched with workplace supervisors and initially shadowed employment and recruitment consultants in their daily work.

The EOs had a carefully staged process beginning with induction followed by two weeks familiarisation, orientation and introduction to EA 3000 (data management system) and some initial client contact. Participants were then rotated through the range of roles and tasks at the Employment office including initial sign ups, job search training, file management including case notes, and casework. By mid year all ILM staff had their own caseload of job seekers. EOs attended staff meetings and training sessions along with other Employment staff. They had individual performance plans and regular contact with their supervisors, Managers and trainer. EOs kept very detailed work logs to discuss at these meetings.

One ILM participant commented that this was a great way to learn as she has been able to observe how things are done, listen to others’ queries and learn from them and has been closely supervised and supported whilst learning. She was then given the task of job search and intensive support sign ups, before working with clients on her own. Specifically, Employment Officers (EOs):

• Provided support and assistance to Employment Consultants in the delivery of Job Network services
• Developed, reviewed and updated vocational profiles
• Under supervision assisted with Job seeker monitoring, reviews, contacts, job placement and post placement support
• Assisted job seekers with job search activities, in some cases in first language
• Provided general reception and administration support as required
• Participated in on and off the job training.

The main skills that William has brought to the office include his attention to detail – being able to pick up inconsistencies in jobseeker records and information; his communication skills in relation to dealing with Centrelink and his bilingual abilities; his IT skills and the ability to quickly navigate all software programs used in AMES.

Steve Washas, AMES Employment Unit Manager, Box Hill
Community connection

In sites where the relationship was strong, Settlement Information Officers got involved in many different activities that brought the AMES site and client communities together. For example, a community consultation advertised by the site brought little response from the community. When the SIO promoted the event directly to the community himself, the consultation was well attended and revealing, because information was exchanged in first language and the invitation to attend had come from a known community member.

Service impacts for AMES

Workplace supervisors and managers were surveyed about the impact ILM participants had on service delivery. They were asked:

- How has employment of staff from client communities impacted on service delivery?
- How do the activities they do and the roles they undertake improve services?
- How has employment of staff from client communities impacted on service delivery?
- How do the activities they do and the roles they undertake improve services?
- These responses indicate that the impact was very positive:

  - Has made job search more effective for jobseekers from African background due to greater understanding of jobseeker needs.
  - Positive impact because the person speaks the client’s dialect/language and jobseeker can identify with the staff member.
  - Jobseekers seem more likely to trust the ED and provide more information to the EO than to the EC.
  - Can explain or reconfirm instructions when an interpreter is not available at short notice.
  - Certainly has helped with developing a more thorough understanding of migrant communities through having a member of a particular community employed at sites.
  - Better assessment due to improved communication and interaction with client (bilingual abilities).
  - Cultural understanding of some clients has assisted us to improve our service delivery.

Managers and Workplace supervisors were also asked about the specific skills and knowledge ILM staff had contributed to service delivery. They reported that the following skills were contributed by Employment Officers:

- Work ethic and determination
- Attention to detail – being able to pick up inconsistencies in jobseeker records and information; communication skills in relation to dealing with Centrelink.
- Eagerness to learn/quick to learn which helped to create a positive atmosphere in the work environment.
- Bilingual language abilities to include interpreting.
- Understanding of clients’ culture – a reference point for cultural differences.
- Ability to build a rapport with these clients and explain their obligations (employment site).
- Previous work experience and training in Community Development.
- Bring their life and work experiences as well as previous work and community connections – helps expand our employer’s network.
- IT skills and the ability to quickly navigate all software programs used in AMES.
- Flexibility.

AMES Transition to Work activities and programs

AMES undertakes a range of Transition to Work Programs to support client needs.

Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) Pilot Programs

For AMEP learners these employment pathway courses focus on a range of industry areas including agriculture, manufacturing, hospitality, warehousing, children’s services, business and financial services and professional pathways. The courses include work experience and industry specific skills and language.

Over 28 of these Pilot Programs are currently in progress with over 100 programs anticipated to be completed over the next financial year.

Skilled Professional Migrants Program

Provides intensive job search skills training, work experience and mentoring for migrants who have qualifications (recognized for work in Australia), skills and experience and who require support to gain employment in their field.

Community Guides Program

Provides employment for people from refugee communities to deliver information and orientation to on-arrival families as part of AMES Settlement Service. Guides do not need formal qualifications to begin work. They receive training and utilise their first language skills and community knowledge in this position. For many this opportunity of local work experience has provided a stepping stone to further employment within AMES or in other agencies.

Case Coordinator Support Workers initiative

Provides opportunities for people from refugee communities with potential, ability and skills the opportunity to work in AMES Settlement Service, shadowing and doing tasks delegated by Case Coordinators, learning on the job and acting in Case Coordinator positions during periods of absence. As Case Coordinator positions are advertised, Case Coordinator Support Workers will be in a strong position to apply based on their extremely relevant local work experience.

Social Enterprises

Provides on the job training and work in small cleaning and catering businesses, particularly for those with few vocational skills which match Australian labour market requirements.

Labour Hire function

AMES undertakes a labour hire role to manage hiring, OHS & compliance training and payroll for small businesses who can provide early entry level employment for refugees in market gardens in south west and eastern areas of Melbourne.

Intermediate Labour Market

AMES is currently using its own capacity as an employer to provide opportunities for newly arrived migrants and refugees to demonstrate and utilise their existing skills and experience in an Australian workplace.
Appendix 1

Transitions to Work: ILM evaluation framework 2008

Research aim
To identify how and to what extent the AMES ILM model addresses barriers to sustainable employment and supports AMES clients and other newly arrived refugees and migrants transition to work in the mainstream labour market.

Research outcomes
The following will be identified, analysed and documented:
- Groups who can most benefit from and who most need AMES ILM approach
- Replicable elements/conditions that need to be in place to establish and maintain an ‘ILM to mainstream employment’ outcome
- Aspects of the ILM process that participants view as valuable
- How the skills and experience of AMES clients and other newly arrived refugees and migrants can be recognised to gain and maintain employment (including first language (L1) and no formal qualifications)
- Outcomes for AMES ILM participants after leaving the program (6 months/12 months) including specific case studies
- ILM inputs, processes, activities, impacts and outcomes for using in evidence to government and other employers
- Potential role of ILM in the settlement process
- Unintended outcomes of the ILM approach

Evaluation framework

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<th>Outcomes Indicators</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1. Opportunities</strong>&lt;br&gt;Provide opportunities for AMES clients and other newly arrived refugees and migrants to get a first opportunity in the Australian labour market</td>
<td>What kinds of opportunities have been identified across AMES? How have opportunities been identified? How many of the opportunities specifically utilise L1 skills? What is the profile of applicants and participants in AMES ILM? What was the impact of providing first opportunities on individuals who transition to work? Can we target other opportunities for future ILM in 2009 and 2010?</td>
<td>ILM records kept by ILM Manager; HR records; Participant interviews</td>
<td>Number and type of positions advertised and filled by AMES clients and other newly arrived refugees and migrants. Number of positions that specifically utilise L1 skills. % of opportunities filled by AMES clients and percentage for whom this is a first opportunity. % number of opportunities filled by other newly arrived refugees and migrants e.g. existing staff such as community guides.</td>
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<td><strong>2. Service impact</strong>&lt;br&gt;Improve our services by using staff from client communities more widely in areas such as L1 service delivery.</td>
<td>How has employment of staff from client communities impacted on service delivery? How did their activities and roles improve services? What specific skills and knowledge of ILM recruits contributed to service delivery? How can we use these ILM positions so that they add sufficient value to our services to be incorporated into a regular staffing structure in the future?</td>
<td>ILM records data kept by ILM Manager; Feedback from EUMs and CC; HIS exit feedback survey; AMP client satisfaction survey</td>
<td>Client satisfaction/feedback on services</td>
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<td><strong>3. Selection and recruitment</strong>&lt;br&gt;Investigate and clarify a range of ways to select and recruit to AMES ILM</td>
<td>What is the profile of applicants and participants in AMES ILM in 2008? Did our ILM recruitment and selection processes identify people who could most benefit from and who most needed AMES ILM approach? What refinements to our processes are needed to better target AMES ILM approach? What selection and recruitment processes have been identified as (more) effective in targeting the skills set of AMES clients and other newly arrived refugees and migrants? What specific changes to AMES systems and processes are required to embed these practices?</td>
<td>Applicant forms and resumes of ILM employees; HR; ILM Manager; Unit Managers with ILM recruits</td>
<td>ILM client profiles Systems and processes in place to identify, select and recruit from within AMES client group and other newly arrived refugees and migrants.</td>
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### Appendix 2

**Profiles of ILM participants**

**Settlement Information Officers**

- **Employees in the Catering and Cleaning Social Enterprises**
- **Employment Officers**
- **Education Assistants**
- **Participants in Corporate Services positions**

**Settlement Information Officers**

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### Program Objectives

**5. Workplace experience**

- Provide supported and rigorous experience that properly prepares ILM recruits for positions with other employers.

**Additional documentation:**

- What resources were required?
- What specific activities did we include?

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<td>5. Workplace experience</td>
<td>What are the key workplace experiences required to prepare ILM recruits for a successful transition to external employment?</td>
<td>Interviews with ILM recruits, their workplace supervisors and mentors. Interviews with ILM exit strategy.</td>
<td>Types of activities undertaken. Number and types of training outcomes. ILM recruits are informed and aware of ILM exit strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What training was provided to ILM recruits?</td>
<td></td>
<td>ILM recruits report (increased) preparedness to move onto other employment.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>How and when was the transition out strategy communicated to ILM recruits and enacted throughout their time in AMES?</td>
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<td>What resources and support did workplace supervisors, mentors and trainers need to ensure ILM recruits are well prepared for the transition to employment outside AMES?</td>
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### 6. Employment destinations

**Participants in AMES ILM achieve employment outside AMES so that “first opportunity” positions are continually available.**

**Additional documentation:**

- What resources were required?
- What specific activities did we include?

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<td>6. Employment destinations</td>
<td>How did AMES facilitate/find/match ILM recruits to external employment opportunities? What are the potential pathways for AMES ILM employees? E.g. from white collar jobs and from the enterprises.</td>
<td>ILM Manager records. Unit level records.</td>
<td>Number and types of employment destinations identified for ILM recruits. 1/3 of ILM recruits who gain employment on exiting AMES ILM.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Number and types of jobs ILM recruits moved into. 1/3 of these jobs are higher than entry level.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sustainability – 2/3 ILM recruits getting a job are still in work after 6 months/12 months.</td>
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<td>Long-term outcomes identified from the ILM: General.</td>
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**Employees in the Catering and Cleaning Social Enterprises**

**Profile**

The Noble Park Canteen operates from an industrial kitchen at Noble Park AMES. A hospitality trainer works with trainees to develop basic hospitality, catering and customer service skills. Participants can complete a short course or undertake Certificate II or III in Hospitality. There are currently three employees working in the canteen – one food supervisor and two casual kitchen hands who completed the training in 2008. Five ILM women worked and trained in the Noble Park Canteen in 2008.

The Magic Green Cleaning Company formed in 2004 to support members of the on arrival Sudanese community to work and earn income through learning cleaning skills. The company holds contracts to clean eight municipal libraries, an AMES site and a neighbourhood house. There were 4 employees (two casual and two fixed contracts) and 3 trainees in 2008.

**Time in Australia**

The average time in Australia was eight and a half years. The most recent arrival came 2 years ago and the longest resident arrived 15 years ago. The gap between arrival and preparing to join the workforce was due to the women’s family commitments.

**Ages**

Ages ranged from 24 to 53, most in their early 30s. The average age of the majority of the group was 36 years.

**Visa category**

All had very good, fluent spoken English skills.

Written English skills were variable across the group, but generally of average level.

**Educational background**

All participants have formal education backgrounds. 6 have University qualifications (Bachelor, Masters), 3 of these from Australian Universities.

6 have TAFE and other vocational qualifications (e.g. Diploma, Cert II, III, IV) gained in Australia.

Although the level of educational attainment varied all participants were very keen to undertake training and further study.

**Employment history**

All but one (the most recent arrival) had worked in Melbourne prior to the ILM, doing various casual cleaning, hospitality, housekeeping, and aged care jobs. The women reported getting jobs through networks of friends and family.

**Employment goals**

Two had clear goals of stable ongoing employment in food services, in a hospital or aged care facility. One planned another course after this traineeship to specialise in pastry before seeking employment. One planned to continue as a cleaner. Others were undecided.

**Languages**

Arabic, Nuer, Indian, Tamil, Maori

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**Employment Officers**

**Profile**

Eleven Employment Officers (EOs) commenced in the ILM in 2008: Six women and five men. Five were existing casual staff or job seekers. Two withdrew from the program during the year, one due to maternity leave.

**Time in Australia**

3 groups:

- In Australia between 2 and 6 years (5 people)
- In Australia between 7 and 15 years (4 people)
- 2 are Australian born and 1 came as a 6 year old (3 people)

**Ages**

Ages range from 18 years to 44 years, most are in their 30s. The average age is 31 years.

**Visa category**

Wide range of visa categories, including refugee, Special Humanitarian Program and family. There was one participant who had come to Australia on a Skilled migrant visa.

**AMEP / English level**

All have very good, fluent spoken English skills.

Written English skills were variable across the group, but generally of average level.

**Educational background**

All participants have formal education backgrounds. 6 have University qualifications (Bachelor, Masters), 3 of these from Australian Universities.

6 have TAFE and other vocational qualifications (e.g. Diploma, Cert II, III, IV) gained in Australia.

**Employment history**

All had worked in Australia before, mainly in casual work. These jobs had been in a range of industries. One person had owned his own business and one was changing from accounting to more community based work.

**Employment goals**

1 aimed to work in human resources as a longer term goal

4 wanted work as employment consultants (all young women)

1 wanted to work in Recruitment

1 aimed to work in Settlement/community work

5 had no specific goal but wanted contract work

**Languages**

Burmese, Karen, Mandarin, Cantonese, Arabic, Sudanese, Nuer, Turkish, Vietnamese
Education Assistants

**Profile**
The Education Assistants role grew out of the Bilingual Education Traineeship program which began in AMES in 2001. The program had three key objectives:

- To provide a pathway to employment for exit AMEP clients via a traineeship.
- To provide new and existing AMEP clients with role models (i.e. someone from their own language group employed in the traineeship role) and encourage these clients to consider traineeships as a pathway to employment.
- To provide bilingual support in the classroom for clients who benefit from assistance in their first language to achieve better learning outcomes.

Thirteen Education Assistants commenced in April 2008, nine women and four men.

**Time in Australia**
The Education Assistants had been in Australia between 6 months and 19 years, the majority less than 4 years, 6 people (i.e. almost half the group) arrived in Australia in 2005 or later. One person had been here 6 months when she joined the program.

**Ages**
Ages range from 20 years to 61 years, with most in their 20s and 30s.

**Visa category**
The Education Assistants group is a mix of skilled, family and refugee visas. Of the six interviewed, 4 came on refugee visas.

**AMEP / English level**
7 Education Assistants had completed AMEP; most of these in 2006 and 2007. Most have very good spoken English and communication skills.

**Educational background**
All Education Assistants had formal educational backgrounds. 3 Education Assistants have tertiary qualifications (Bachelor, Masters) completed overseas. 4 have TAFE and other vocational qualifications (e.g. Cert II, III, IV) gained in Australia. 5 have high school certificates, one of these completed in Australia.

**Employment history**
2 Education Assistants had worked overseas in teaching positions. All, except for the woman who had arrived 6 months ago, had previous employment in Australia such as cleaning, shop assistant, casual interpreting, accounting, process work and aged care nursing. 9 of the 13 trainees had done casual work in areas related to their roles as Education Assistants. These included working as community guides in settlement and/or teacher aide or bilingual classroom aide positions.

**Employment goals**
Six have clear goals to find work in related areas such as language teachers, teacher aides or work in the community support area. (1). 1 Education Assistant has a clear goal to work as an aged care trainer, combining this education experience with her nursing background. 3 were undecided or unsure of their direction after the ILM, and after 3 months of work as Education assistants 2 were clear they didn’t want work as bilingual aides. 1 is seeking work in office administration.

**Languages**
Burmese, Chin, Karen, Mandarin and Cantonese, Dari, Vietnamese, French, Khmer

Corporate Support participants

**Profile**
AMES conducts a program for skilled professional migrants who are seeking work in their professional fields. The program consists of:

- Three weeks intensive training addressing crucial areas such as the Australian job market, resume writing, telephone skills, application writing, key selection criteria, interview skills and Australian workplace culture.
- Assistance in securing a 4 week work placement.

Ten participants from the skilled professional migrants program joined the ILM program during 2008.

**Time in Australia**
They had been in Australia a relatively short time – the most recent arrival had been here only 2 months when she joined the program. The majority were in their first year in Australia. One participant had been here for 4 years.

**Ages**
Ages ranged from late 20s to early 40s, the majority in their 30s.

**Visa category**
Skilled, Family and Special Humanitarian categories.

**AMEP / English level**
All had very good oral communication skills.

**Educational background**
The participants held qualifications ranging from Bachelor to Masters degrees across a range of disciplines.

**Employment history**
Two had not worked in their professional field either here or overseas, being recent graduates. Of those who had worked, the previous employment had been in:
- Marketing, Sales Management
- Business and Strategic Planning
- Programmer and database analyst
- Commerce and Accountancy as an auditor, accountant/book keeper
- HR Assistant as an Administrator

**Employment goals**
Six have clear goals to find work in related areas such as language teachers, teacher aides or work in the community support area. (1). 1 Education Assistant has a clear goal to work as an aged care trainer, combining this education experience with her nursing background. 3 were undecided or unsure of their direction after the ILM, and after 3 months of work as Education assistants 2 were clear they didn’t want work as bilingual aides. 1 is seeking work in office administration.

**Languages**
Mandarin, Cantonese, Spanish, Indian, Arabic, Vietnamese, Serbian, Filipino
Appendix 3

Literature Review

The overwhelming message in international literature is that;

- ILM programs give those who are most removed from the labour market a bridge back to the world of work by lifting their employability.
- Their galvanising feature is paid work on a temporary contract – up to 12 months if possible. The paid work has to be combined with training, personal development and job search.

3.1 Lessons from international experience

The UK government brought in the New Deal for Communities (NDC) policy because it was troubled by ‘worklessness’ in disadvantaged areas. The government funded diverse, local level Intermediate Labour Market programs designed to connect some of the most disadvantaged members of local communities with paid work. Many were documented and evaluated throughout their implementation and are often cited in the literature as important examples of large scale ILM projects.

Finn and Simmonds

A comprehensive international survey by Finn and Simmonds covers ILMs in Europe, the United Kingdom and USA. Their report points to the common elements of successful ILMs:

- Inclusion of the most disadvantaged
- Defined geographical areas
- Devising and controlling at local level
- Management of the transition from benefits to a waged employee
- Support services for the individual employee including access to training
- Work that is close to conventional labour market conditions
- Local partnerships
- Investment in staff capacity
- Connection with real jobs

Case studies showed that the closer work experience is to employment in the regular labour market, in terms of job content and conditions of work, the higher subsequent job placement rates will be.

To maximise the effectiveness of an ILM:

- Participants must engage in job search
- Providers of ILMs must promote job placement
- Management of the transition from benefits to a waged employee
- Local partnerships
- Investment in staff capacity
- Connection with real jobs

They found that work experience plus skills training and/or numeracy and literacy training, gets results.

3.2 The Australian experience

The Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) in Melbourne introduced the ILM concept on a small scale by using its status as a Group Training Organisation. The Brotherhood employed trainees from local public housing estates in Fitzroy and Collingwood to help them transit to other jobs. This work involved state and federal governments and is strongly supported by the Victorian Government’s Neighbourhood Renewal strategy.

BSL targeted long-term unemployed people with multiple barriers to employment: most had been out of work for more than two years, few had post-secondary educational qualifications, and many had other health issues or personal problems.

The BSL approach has several dimensions: community engagement, work experience, personal support, pre-vocational training, job placement and post-placement support, and accredited training qualifications through traineeships.

This ‘mixed model’ is both necessary and effective for people with multiple barriers to employment.

Victorian research in 2008 described barriers facing refugees who attempt to enter the labour market in Australia. These include:

- Recent arrival
- Discrimination
- Low English language skills
- Lack of education and training
- Lack of labour market knowledge
- Poor access to formal and informal employment networks
- Poor provision of advice (including guidance and training)
- Cultural transition
- Pre arrival experiences

Commonly the qualifications and skills of newly arrived refugees are not recognised or are not transferable to Australian workplaces.

AMES documented barriers faced by skilled migrants in accessing employment in a study undertaken in 2004 for the Victorian Office of Training and Tertiary Education. Major barriers were lack of understanding of Australian business culture and lack of good communication skills, particularly networking and interview skills. Many professional migrants lacked practical skills for job seeking and had unrealistic expectations of the job seeking process. Lack of local work experience was highlighted as a barrier by migrants and employers alike.

Presentation and intelligibility were also cited as major barriers for some migrants.

Importantly the AMES study noted that

Barriers are not limited to the attributes of the applicants; clearly some barriers emanate from the employers (and sometimes co workers) and may include ethniccentrism, prejudice and stereotyping, and more tractable factors such as lack of inter-cultural knowledge, discomfort and embarrassment about how to deal with people from other cultures.

The greatest barrier was low confidence. Many migrants had unsuccessful and demoralising experiences, particularly those who came with a belief that their skills were in short supply and getting a job would be easy. They had great difficulty marketing themselves to employers. This was compounded when marketing of the self is culturally alien.

In a 2008 study of reasons why overseas professionals have high levels of unemployment, cultural differences and expectations were shown to put migrants at a disadvantage in job interviews.

A number of AMES ILM participants experienced similar difficulties in both real and practice job interviews.

1 Dr Brooke McDonald, Prof Sandy Gifford, Mr Kim Webster, Pro John Wiseman and Ms Sue Casey March 2008. Refugee Resettlement in Regional and Rural Victoria: Impacts and Policy Issues. Report commissioned by Victorian Health Promotion Foundation and prepared by Refugee Health Research Centre, La Trobe University, The McCaughey Centre, UoH Centre for the Promotion of Mental Health and Community Wellbeing, University of Melbourne and The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture.

2 AMES Research and Learning Innovation Unit October 2004 Addressing employability: Interventions in the AMES Employment Skills Centre. Report prepared by for the New and Emerging SMA Units, OTTE.

3 Australian cultural values of independence, practicality, forthrightness that make us gregarious self-starters that shoot from the hip, won’t necessarily be reflected in the overseas candidates that the employers are interviewing. Whereas they may have come from a collective, hierarchical, symbolic society that respects authority, and is seeking to show some guidance from their management. A practical example – Well, let’s take the most common answer is no answer at all, a nervous grin or a smile, that’s the candidate not actually knowing how to answer that question. Where do you want to be in five years?” for example. An Australian candidate may explicitly ask and state their goals. It may be seen by an Asian candidate to be quite boastful and inappropriate with somebody of a more senior rank than them. They’ll be looking for guidance from their management. So they won’t actually know how to answer that question. (Source: Graham Meyer CEO of the Institute of Chartered Accountants on Background Briefing, ABC Radio National 17 August 2008 http://www.abc.net.au/rn/backgroundbriefing/stories/2008/2332972.htm).
3.3 Design and development considerations

An evaluation of ILM projects under the New Deal for Communities policy1 recommended 6 design and development strategies:

- Flexibility in eligibility criteria and client development, based on evolving knowledge
  An ILM operating in a local community must learn to understand the needs and disadvantages of their target groups through data about disadvantage, available employment, poor educational achievement and low skills. Even so, an ILM’s client group will never be homogenous. Participants need a lot of induction and development processes.

- Adaptability in support processes to meet client needs
  The ILM must use different kinds of interventions – from informal job-matching to quite intensive post-placement support, and must intervene solidly for periods from a few weeks to more than two years.

- A pragmatic approach to training and skills
  An ILM must set up basic skills training that takes account of local demand-side priorities. An ILM that knows about the skills that local employers need, will increase the number of work placements available, and better prepare clients for the realities of their local labour market.

- An evolving network of committed employers
  An ILM with good local labour market knowledge and locally useful training programs has to establish relationships with employers from both the private and not for profit sectors.

- Pro-active networking
  Networking increases the number of work placements for clients and informs the ILM about future skills requirements of employers. They must use that knowledge to design new training programs.

- Good management and administration
  Putting a good ILM staff team in place really matters. Whether dealing with clients, training providers, partners or employers, an ILM team needs excellent personal and professional skills.

3.4 Key characteristics of successful ILMs

UK research2 surveyed 65 ILM programs and wrote up 11 case studies that reflected a cross-section of activity. The research described key characteristics of successful ILMs. The BSL notes a number of these characteristics in its report Investing in People: Intermediate Labour Markets as pathways to employment.

Successful ILMs:
- Define the target group amongst the disadvantaged, either through a place-based approach or by targeting specific populations
- Establish clear objectives: the primary purpose is progression into jobs
- Make participation voluntary to avoid stigmatisation and encourage genuine commitment
- Replicate the conventional employment market in terms of application process, wages, workplace protocols, normal workplace disciplines and employee rights
- Create individual pathways encouraging practical work experience as early as possible
- Set up intensive case management, including workplace supervision and support, with low participant-to-staff ratios (generally 25:1) and at least weekly contact and periodic progress reviews to deal with actual and potential problems
- Offer a program lasting between 9 and 18 months, with a specified time-limit to reinforce its role as a transition into the conventional labour force
- Flexible about the training on offer and major on transferrable skills
- Cover job search assistance, help with job applications and job search as integral parts of the process and possibly create an arrangement with an external employer to provide ongoing employment, in order to ensure a transition to employment after the ILM
- Put measurable performance criteria in place for participants’ contracts, and are clear about when reviews will take place, how and when the program will be judged and what outcomes are expected
- Are administered by a strong organisation that is embedded in local community networks and prepared to take the financial risk

Other significant characteristics:
- ILM managers (i.e. the employers) must have final say on who gets recruited
- ILM candidates should have more supervision, guidance and support than regular employees in comparable jobs.

3.5 Comparisons with the AMES ILM program

Other Australian and overseas ILMs work with the long term and very long term unemployed, and target participants with low skills levels, high levels of welfare dependency, poor educational attainment, long periods of worklessness and economic inactivity, and who live in disadvantaged areas.

These ILMs create a bridge between unemployment and the world of work for people at risk of becoming even more distant from the labour market. Improving general employability is one of the main aims. Work placements are generally in local industries and workplaces and may be part of neighbourhood renewal (or similar) projects.

AMES Intermediate Labour Market targets a different group – newly arrived migrants and refugees – fairly early in their settlement period. Many have skills, experience, employment histories, and significant levels of formal education. They are keen to do more study and training. AMES offers participants a first workplace opportunity in Australia, and proactively addresses risks of long term unemployment.

Whilst the target group is different, a number of lessons from the international programs and research apply. In particular:

- Specify a time limit to underline that the job is transitional
- Make job search assistance integral to the job, especially for migrants and refugees experiencing the job search process for the first time in Australia
- Be flexible with the training component, and focus on transferrable skills
- Replicate the conventional employment market and environment as much as possible, particularly in giving rigorous and honest feedback on workplace performance
- Maintain a clear focus on progression into jobs so that all staff who work with the ILM participants assist them towards this goal
- Support and train workplace supervisors
- Use multiple and concurrent interventions to address multiple and concurrent barriers

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1. Dr Brooke McDonald, Prof Sandy Gifford, Ms Kim Webber, Pro. John Wixan and Ms Sue Casey March 2006, Refugee Resettlement in Regional and Rural Victoria - Impacts and Policy Issues. Report commissioned by Victorian Health Promotion Foundation and prepared by Refugee Health Research Centre La Trobe University, The McLaughry Centre, VicHealth Centre for the Promotion of Mental Health and Community Wellbeing, University of Melbourne and The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture.

