Mind the Gap! The growing chasm between funding driven agencies, and social and community knowledge and practice.

Abstract

The field of human services is increasingly adopting narrow practice approaches, driven by contemporary funding priorities. Such approaches reflect a reductionist understanding of human need, and run contrary to the wisdom, accumulated knowledge, experience, evidence and ethics of social and community development work.

Drawing from a small group of refugee women’s accounts of everyday challenges as well as their efforts to develop personal agency in resettlement, this paper highlights the mismatch between the complexities that such women face in everyday settlement processes and the focus of services available to them. It argues for a more responsive person-in-environment focus that could enable and enhance women’s own efforts and aspirations for themselves and their children. The current tendency towards case management and away from community development is contributing to what we call the diminishing architecture of community development, and therefore represents a shift that is difficult to reverse.

Refugee settlement work requires developmental actions within the cultural group, between new arrivals and the host community, and between new arrivals and the host society’s resources systems and structures. Concurrently, the field needs to reclaim a broader paradigm of human service practice allowing for joined up, locality-based, capacity building work that is responsive to people, contexts and specific issues emerging over time. A broader funding paradigm that values social and community knowledge and practice, locality work and enables on-going, incremental, proactive changes is also needed.

Keywords: refugee settlement, culture, human services practice, capacity building
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Introduction

‘La musique, la danse, les amis, le rire’ (music, dance, friends, laughter). These were part of Camille’s life before civil unrest erupted in the Democratic Republic of Congo, separating her from family members, and forcing her to abandon everything to seek asylum. Safe now, Camille finds life in her tiny unit to be sadly lacking in music, dance, friends and laughter.

Camille was part of a small group of refugee women who participated in an ethnographic project with eight women who arrived in Australia as refugees. The quote above is drawn from the first author’s reflections during fieldwork over a twelve-month period in 2008 and 2009, where the women participated in interviews and constructed their own digital stories to document narratives about their mental health and wellbeing. Their stories followed the intricacies and complexities of their everyday lives indicating a mix of resilience and despair. There were instances of personal agency, producing feelings of wellbeing, as well as struggle, loneliness, isolation and states of mental health that reflected harshly in their physical bodies and family lives. The study did however show that for women who were sole parents, the settlement journey could be a challenging and often lonely one. Indeed, participating women were supported by human service agencies upon their arrival and continued to intermittently access agencies where basic services such as housing, employment and language classes were concerned. However, they felt largely alone in establishing their lives in Australia. The women themselves called it ‘learning to stand on our own two feet’, and they were conscious of not asking too much from agencies or from their communities. Their stories touched us, evoking respect for their resilience, but raising questions about how such families can respond to their own aspirations, when they have access to fewer social relations and community capital, and

1 Pseudonyms are used for all research participants.
experience tight financial circumstances, paired with limited basic support from human service agencies because of tight funding.

The field of refugee resettlement is certainly a challenging one:

One major issue facing those working with refugees is that they are likely to find themselves in the position of what is now frequently referred to as social exclusion (or marginality: Wolfe, 1995), and in a number of dimensions: exclusion in relation to the labour (or livelihood in rural contexts) and housing markets, from community and social services, from political participation (in its widest sense), and from involvement in organizations which might give them a sense of identity or control over their own futures (Craig and Lovel, 2005, p. 133).

As academics involved in human services research and teaching, and with an interest in refugee issues, the women’s experiences caused us to confront the very significant chasm between the theories and practices in an academic context and those currently embedded in fields of practice. In our own approach, we draw on a range of theories, including broad sociological and cultural theories (such as cultural safety (Ramsden, 1992) and theories of intersectionality and plurality (Vervliet, De Mol, Broekaert and Derluyn, 2013), and a range of theories relating to knowledge and practices of community development work (Author 2, 2010; Westoby, 2008; 2009).

The women’s stories confirmed our view that human services and community development work, in many domains, is narrowing to a pragmatic, atheoretical, transactional approach in the interests of addressing basic needs in fairly uniform ways. In Australia, settlement services provide basic supports for people on humanitarian visas during the initial stages, which usually includes assistance in finding accommodation, income support, English language classes, orientation to health and medical services, and accessing training and employment (Department of Immigration and Border Protection [DIBP], 2013). The Department believes that some of these outcomes (namely securing accommodation and connecting with services to meet identified needs) can be achieved within 12 months of arrival. After the first few years of resettlement, people are expected
to have achieved self-sufficiency, have ability to access mainstream resources, and find social support through their families and the largely unfunded activities of their ethnic organisations. The refugee women in the study had been in Australia between two and five years, and all experienced a lonely struggle, although the lone women (five out of eight) expressed that most poignantly.

Drawing the stories together, that study articulated a rationale for community development as an important means of linking new settlers to members of the host community and to activities and opportunities that reflect the settlers’ aspirations. In retrospect, we know that, like so many research findings, this will have little impact on funding or practice. Similarly, much of the breadth and scope of our teaching will rarely find expression through graduate practices in the field. Indeed, in Australia, we are witnessing a decrease in community development practice; it can confidently be said that the architecture to support it has itself largely disappeared. We argue then that the practices currently embedded across most social fields, whilst increasingly complex in managerial terms, fall far short of the kinds of engagement implied by the helping professions’ commitment to social justice and empowerment (as outlined for instance, by the International Federation of Social Workers [IFSW], 2012).

We want to contest the view that organising multicultural festivals and volunteer settlement programs (Refugee Council of Australia, 2012) alone constitute community development. As the name suggests, community development is a method of working that builds and mobilises the capacities and capabilities of a community (Author 2, 2010; Macleod, 2010). In this case, the community is geographic (suburb or region of residence), linked by shared circumstance, and linked through shared ethnic identity. So there are (at least) three layers of community to be engaged with. Where there have been community

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2 As attested by the Queensland Government’s large Valuing Diversity Grants Program (2014).
development approaches over time, both capacity (Steiner and Markantoni, 2013) and capability (Author 2, 2010; Lewis, 2012) are present to some extent. Capacity refers to the various resources at a community’s disposal and capability refers to the ability of the community to work those resources to achieve local agendas. Capacity is visible in people’s organisations, community groups actively engaged with issues and people in their communities, relationships between people within their groups and between groups, local leaders who know how to relate with various individuals, groups and larger organisations (churches, schools, NGOs) that know how to auspice and support communities as they progress agendas. Capability is the know-how that underpins all of this. That know-how involves how to form and run groups, analyse and determine agendas, how to reach people, and include and engage them and their agendas.

The paper then recapitulates some aspects of the women’s accounts to identify their description of everyday challenges as well as their efforts to develop personal agency as they negotiate those challenges. The final part considers two important points: firstly, the mismatch between the complexities that such women face in everyday settlement processes and the focus of services available to them, and secondly, ways in which a responsive person-in-environment focus could open areas for community development practice to further enable and support women’s own efforts and aspirations for themselves and their children. This paper thus provides an analysis of the diminishing architecture of community development, and how this is increasingly unlikely now to be an intervention strategy of choice.

Whilst there are many implications of this discussion, the three that most disturb us are that:
i) The current funding-driven focus on the most vulnerable, means that many people who are endeavouring to cope alone can be slowly losing ground until they reach that most vulnerable point;

ii) The human services have long recognised the need for a developmental, preventative, early intervention focus that supports people’s efforts to stand on their own two feet; yet, the professions have largely let go of the struggle to uphold this in the policy and funded practice domain; and

iii) Whether the focus is on refugees, people with mental illness, with disabilities, or in poverty, Aboriginal people, or young people struggling to find meaning, a professionalised intervention is not enough. There also needs to be a focus on building the kinds of communities that have intent, capacity and capability to include and enable people across various stages of their life journeys.

This then is not a research paper (see Author 1, 2013 for full account). What we argue here is that a narrow practice based on a reductionist understanding of human need is being driven by contemporary funding priorities, and this runs contrary to the wisdom, accumulated knowledge, experience, evidence and ethics of social and community development work. Such a narrow approach is likely to leave many people in an invisible slide into deeper forms of vulnerability (Australian Council of Social Services [ACOSS], 2013). Importantly, the depth of the women’s narratives analysed using an intersectional framework (Vervliet et al., 2013) demonstrates that nuanced understandings of lived experiences are also required in the field. We focus on refugees, but the thesis is relevant to many other groups who may be experiencing high levels of vulnerabilities and living at the margins. We draw on the study of refugee women because it provided instructive data illustrating the chasm between funded practice versus practice grounded in theory, evidence and ethics. Our aim here is to argue for a reclaiming of the wider bases of
practice, and in particular a reclaiming of community development work. Only then can the findings of studies like the one discussed here have applicability. Having established our objective, we now turn to the women’s stories to understand their resettlement journeys as sole parents.

Standing on Our Own Two Feet

*Lone Women and the Settlement Experience: Cultural Relations*

Camille now lives with her daughter, younger sister and niece in a small rented unit in a low socio-economic outer Brisbane suburb. Camille spends most days at home alone, cleaning and cooking, and watching TV to occupy her time while learning English. She wants to work, but she has neither the right qualifications nor the right experience. She drives around the neighbourhood even though she does not have a driving licence. How else, she asks, would she get to courses or health appointments? There is no one else Camille can rely on. She has a range of health issues, which bother her because she was always so healthy and active. She reflects that members of her community are suspicious of her single status and gossip about her. She ignores it, remaining connected to them so that she does not find herself totally isolated. Confined to the four walls of her unit, music, friends, dance and laughter are sadly lacking in her life now. At the same time, this is a safe space. It is her space (paraphrased from Author 1, 2011).

If there is a line between resilience and despair, Camille, of all the women in the study, straddled it most uncomfortably. She has housing, shelter and income support. She is raising her daughter, attending English Language classes, and managing routine cleaning and cooking tasks. A number of themes are evident in the summary above: firstly, she is finding her life drab. She wants the warmth of social engagement (music, dance, laughter and friends) that she found in her community of origin, but those networks are not recreated here. She is driving illegally. She invests in superficial relationships where she does not feel valued to avoid isolation. She sees a job as a way forward, but has no conduit to employment opportunities she would enjoy. She admits to health problems but is unsure how she is meant to get better. A key theme for Camille is her changed relationship to people of her own culture. The vibrancy she once experienced in her home country has given way to suspicion and gossip. She responds to this by treading a fine line between
engaging far enough to keep social isolation at bay and maintaining a distance to protect her sense of self.

All of the lone women in the study discussed the challenges in maintaining their culture in the new setting; for instance, one woman said, ‘We are here in Australia but we didn’t forget our culture’ (Malika, Burundi). Parents remind children, who quickly integrate into Australian culture, that they have a culture at home:

    Australia is our second home, but again I told my children, we have to make sure we have a home back home. Time will come when we’ll need to go back and visit back home, at least we have a land, we have shelter there. And also [the children] they have to keep communicating back home. They should not forget about home or forget about our culture because we live in Australia (Maeva, Sudan).

The main strategy for re-establishing cultural relations here is participation with others from their own ethnic group. This takes a number of forms such as attending weddings, celebrations and rituals, actively participating in social activities with their ethnic group, helping others who are newly arrived to settle, and attending church services with the ethnic group as a family. However, the decision by women to raise children on their own instead of re-marrying yielded challenges on several fronts:

    It is really challenging, even in the community (…) nobody will listen to you, because they just think you are a single woman…When you are successful, you work, you educate your children, like myself, I did everything, all I could to educate my children. I don’t know if it is jealousy or anything, instead of appreciating as a single woman manage to do all that, now they’ve come up with strange stories, they don’t believe that I can do that. (Maeva, Sudan)

Additional pressures did not only come from male community members, but also from women who were married and thus ‘followed the norm’: ‘Married women do, they make it harder for other women. Like you are born, the system is like that, so you just follow the rest, without questioning why is it like this’ (Maeva, Sudan). This exclusion from other women contributed to the participants’ sense of isolation (see Author 1a, 2013).

    Some of the lone women assisted newly arrived families to go through the difficult stages of resettlement by sharing their home and resources, despite their own precarious
situations. They drew on their own experiences as recent migrants to support others grappling with the requirements of this new context, as one participant explained: ‘We can keep on learning from one another, those who have been here for longer can help us who are facing difficulties in settling in a new environment, we can support one another and be there for one another’ (Eva, Sudan). The women wanted to encourage their children to assist others no matter what their own situation. Such values were important in the women’s social worlds, even though their limited time and resources meant further sacrifices to keep afloat. Despite their efforts and contributions to community, lone women continued to feel excluded because of their status. The community’s scrutiny extended to their child-rearing abilities, and the women’s ‘success’ was measured according to their children’s scholastic performance and overall behaviour:

In fact being single, the community sometimes they consider that a woman, that is just a perspective or a belief they have, that a woman cannot bring up children, because they consider women as the weaker person or the weaker sex, that can’t manage a lot of things…The way the community perceives it is so negative. If the children are disciplined, it’s ok, if they are not well disciplined, they will blame you, the mother (Maeva, Sudan).

Like Camille, other women articulated that they would not isolate themselves from their communities, despite the scrutiny and gossip: ‘I am a single woman, I maintain my dignity, whatever assumptions they have or belief they had about single women I will not make a mistake, not make anything which will prove I’m not an upright woman’ (Maeva, Sudan). For some participants, solace came in meeting with other lone women:

But when they are in their company by themselves, [single women] are happy (Eva, Sudan).

So I say, why don’t we come up with a group of women? Maybe we meet once a month, it rotates from each home, so that it keeps that connection (Maeva, Sudan).
New Relations in the New Setting: Community & Belonging

Lone women not only experienced significant difficulty in re-establishing relations with their own community, but also often felt isolated from the wider Australian community: ‘Everybody is by herself. There is no connection anymore. Children they have friends in schools, they can communicate with their friends, they have their books. But with single parents, you find that you are all by yourself’ (Maeva, Sudan). Children’s quick adaptation to local systems and in particular the Australian culture – which was often seen as undesirable but necessary – increased the generation gap, underlining the isolation of their mothers: ‘Even my children speak English, and some of them study in high school. My youngest child speaks English very well like other Australians’ (Malika, Burundi).

Participants encouraged their children to develop links with people outside their ethnic communities, although this often caused them stress. They expressed fear in relation to the changes they saw happening in their children including their ready embrace of Australian culture, while knowing very well that this was necessary for their children’s wellbeing. Sole parents had no opportunity to discuss children and child rearing with other members of the Australian community, so it was often hard for the women to know how other parents managed to guide their children amidst so much apparent freedom:

Dealing with one or more teenager(s) in the house really affects a single parent’s mental wellbeing. It is more difficult for those who have difficult children who don’t cooperate with their parents, and huge language barrier, makes them struggle every single day of their life (Eva, Sudan).

Some of the women themselves had benefitted from links with other Australian community members. For instance, participants recalled positive experiences with TAFE teachers or co-workers who assisted them in securing employment and improving English language skills. However, few had on-going relations outside their ethnic group and
therefore felt little sense of belonging to the wider Australian community. Importantly, language remained a significant barrier, especially for women who were not employed and had few opportunities to speak English. In the home context, it was not unusual for the family to converse in different languages, but rarely was English used routinely at home. Children therefore quickly surpassed their parents in language skills, and the mothers experienced this acutely as increasing their sense of isolation.

Rebuilding Social Life in the New Context: Re-establishing Personal Agency

The women in the study shared that they had moved from more collectivist cultures into a relatively individualist socio-cultural context. Whilst they all exhibited personal agency in coping with everyday tasks, the women also experienced frustration when they could not progress things that would benefit them and their families. That participants bought into the dominant western discourse of self-reliance was evident from their determination not to become a burden on agencies and communities, but rather to soldier on, alone. Nevertheless, raising children, learning the language, working out how schools operate, learning to drive, pursuing further studies, finding employment, these were significant challenges as much as opportunities for the women.

Some actively sought independence through work and education; one woman gained employment in the non-government sector, using skills acquired before forced migration to Australia. She found it hard juggling work, family, study and community obligations, as well as being a regular spokesperson to government, but she maintained a strong commitment to all of her roles. Several women strove to improve their skills and qualifications by going to TAFE [Technical and Further Education] colleges or university, as they were conscious of the additional opportunities they could access with Australian qualifications. For instance, participants explained their commitment to learning English:
I learned English through TAFE, commitment, and lots of practice in speaking, reading and writing. I set a goal that I want to achieve, which I think contributed very much for my learning English (Eva, Sudan).

When I came from Africa I couldn’t speak English. But now I can... Now I study at TAFE, I communicate with others very well, I want to know English very well and finish Level III, because I want to get nursing job again (Malika, Burundi).

The women’s sense of independence was palpable in their desire to acquire practical skills such as driving and obtaining a licence. In the absence of male assistance to learn this skill, lone women sought the support of local non-government organisations for subsidised driving lessons:

I had opportunity to learn driving for free. That is interesting thing. When I’ll have my licence, it will make me a big different; I will get a good job, easy transport for me and my family, easy to do shopping, take or pick up children at school etc. I will have a good life as soon as possible (Malika, Burundi).

They wanted to be mobile and independent, not only to improve their everyday lives, but also to set an example for their children. The women could identify which everyday practical skills they needed to facilitate the process of navigating through complex situations in Australia. It is gradually, through having to take the initiative, persist and learn that the women developed personal agency in the structures of their new setting.

A Broader Framework: Practice and Infrastructure

The women’s complex circumstances conveyed in the narratives above prompted us to reflect on how wide the gap between practice and lived realities is growing. Here, we offer some thoughts on how this trend can be minimised from a community development perspective.

Valuing Community Development Practice

One of the distinguishing features of human service theorising since the earliest days of the profession has been a concern with people’s environments, as espoused, for example, in the IFSW’s (2012) Statement of Ethical Principles. When working with
people who resettle to Australia as refugees, it is especially important to work with the person and the social dimensions of their environment (Author 1, 2013; Fong, 2005; Kemp, 2001). Concurrently, the role of human services education is to prepare practitioners for increasingly complex settings, where they are well equipped to understand and engage with a multiplicity of issues as part of their practice frameworks (for instance, Suárez, Newman and Glover Reed, 2008). Our observations of the field suggest that, in reality, whilst students have been exposed to a range of practice modalities, new practitioners often display skills to work with people on an individual level but struggle to make sense of broader community or person-in-environment processes. Their limited expertise in that area is exacerbated by increasingly constrained practice frameworks around them and the funded context they work in.

From a narrow settlement perspective, the women in this study can be said to be on their way and ‘integrating’ according to government policy terms$^3$. The contemporary neoliberal concept of self-reliance is at odds with a practice perspective, which recognises that people’s lives take shape and meaning from the networks, social processes and social structures they are part of. These either provide the scaffolding to move through various domains of their lives, or they constrain, inhibit and baffle individuals and communities. It is through participation in broader social processes that refugee communities can access social capital, or not (see for instance Daley, 2009; Zetter, Griffiths and Zigona, 2005). One way of framing the practice purpose of community development is to enhance the relationships between persons and the networks, processes and structures of their social, economic, cultural and political contexts (Macleod, 2010).

$^3$ This assumption is not vastly different in other contexts. Consider for example, Vervliet et al.’s (2013) exploration of social categories linked to unaccompanied refugee mothers in Belgium, which revealed significant gaps between migration policies and the women’s accounts of transacting their environments as women, refugees, mothers and community members.
Based on extensive engagement and on-going dialogue with South Sudanese communities, Westoby (2009) argued that refugee distress resulting from war, loss, torture is also about disruption to cultural life, social life and sense of agency in the resettlement country. He argued that the bio-medical model of individual healing is not, in itself, enough. Rather, more intensive engagement within and between people around the tasks of rebuilding social, cultural and economic life could itself be healing. He expressed concern that the expertise and knowledge to support this is not being applied in the human service field (Westoby, 2009). The study discussed in this paper came up with similar conclusions.

In terms of culture, settling groups need relations to people of their own cultural backgrounds. Relations within such groups however, can be strained, as people settle at different paces, are impacted differently by host culture ideas and values, and seek agency in the new settings in different ways. Westoby (2009) provides examples of how facilitated dialogue between conflicting groups, such as young people and parents, men and women, Elders and members, can assist them to work through transitional tensions and crises and still retain their culture. The settling person, however, also needs to develop a sense of community and belonging in their new setting. This is often the hardest and most overlooked challenge, and sat heavily with all of the women of the study. It is these networks of support, friendship and social activity which can provide access to the social capital of host community members, and can, for example, open doors for adults and children. Thirdly, new settlers need to rebuild their sense of themselves as competent actors in their social and economic contexts. This struggle for personal agency in a confusing and complicated system can be very undermining. Those neighbourhoods where refugees have settled well have likely had a range of projects involving professionals and local people that have combined work on these three fronts (see for instance, Humpage
and Marston, 2005; Zetter et al., 2005). Skilled community development workers know how to join the dots, between groups, projects, issues and local resources so as to create linkages and bridges for people. Where there is no history of this in a suburb, social isolation fills the gaps.

Both agencies and practitioners are thus currently being uncomfortably positioned within the narrow economistic emphasis of the funding paradigm (ACOSS, 2010), making the field fraught with intricacies. In Foucault’s (1980) terms, this positioning is an effect of techniques of power/knowledge, and the recommended strategic response is not to conform but to find ways to do, and be, otherwise. We see reclaiming broad paradigms of practice as a means of subverting and countering the dominant paradigm, whilst doing what the profession actually espouses commitment to.

*Valuing Community Development Infrastructure*

‘Community Development’ is likely to be taught as one of twenty-four units in a Bachelors degree, and few student placements can offer genuine community development experiences. Few people now have the role of community development worker, while the number of practitioners and managers with the expertise to support and supervise such work seems to be diminishing, and the funding for such work is all but gone.

There are now few organisations operating in Australia that are genuinely people’s organisations. Gradually, agency boards have corporatized, and community organisations are encumbered by tight contractual arrangements (Carson & Kerr, 2010). As successive governments have cut back funding, organisations compete with each other for service delivery funds and become less representative of the communities they set out to serve. Now they are also short staffed, low in resources, and contracted to a narrow range of outcomes. Our observations suggest that there are many community groups genuinely reaching out to welcome people, but there are also many that have become closed systems.
Schools, churches and individuals who provided the unpaid resource and often the leadership to progressive community activity are often over-committed. Even the support of some of the women found in a TAFE teacher, a neighbour or a classmate, has dried up as lives have become busier and more inward looking.

Where a significant refugee community moves into an area, it is not just the settlement agencies that need to be mobilised, but also the generic agencies, schools, health services, businesses, and most importantly, the sports groups, youth groups, school committees, community centres, churches, recreation, arts and music groups, playgroups and women’s groups\(^4\). Without community development facilitation, professional groups too often resort to ‘fixing’ the refugee ‘problem’ rather than expanding the institutional frameworks to be more inclusive and responsive. Where there has been a history of community development, the non-professional groups often have well established processes of reaching out, welcoming and making their boundaries porous so that new arrivals can see the ways in which they can engage, make new relationships and do things they enjoy (Daley, 2009; Macleod, 2010; Westoby, 2008). Leadership emerges in unexpected places; relationships are formed that carry people through quite tense periods and challenging activities.

Someone like Camille, then, would be introduced to people who share her love of music and dance, and through these connections, she may enjoy herself, enhance her English language skills, make new friends, and begin to see how she can create a rewarding life. Maeva, Malika and Eva who were worried about their teenage kids would be able to have conversations with people from the wider community and discuss how they address such issues. Once relationships are developed, host community members can

\(^4\) The documentary *Mary Meets Mohammed* (Kirkpatrick, 2013) depicts the kinds of transformations within and between people that can happen when a community responds to something happening in its midst and bring about change. In this film, a small community is galvanised to support asylum seekers, and the action is viewed through the eyes of the local women’s knitting group.
enable access to their networks, work alongside settling families to address issues that arise at school or elsewhere. These are the processes, we argue, that should be privileged in the field to enable a more responsive system.

**Conclusion**

We have discussed the settlement experience of a small number of refugee women and their families, and argued that, whilst services have met some of their basic needs, the women have been abandoned to a lonely settlement journey, which impacted most harshly on lone parents. We have juxtaposed this account with the espoused mission of the human services and, given its broad knowledge base, a potential to respond much more fully. However, in the field, we see narrow policy matched by narrow practice, which stops at basic physical need fulfilment, with little regard for the quality of practice. A consequence of this is an atrophy of the infrastructure and capacity for community development.

We have argued that refugee settlement requires enabling and developmental action at three levels – within the cultural group, between new arrivals and the host community, and between new arrivals and the resources systems and structures of the host society. Such work requires getting to know the people, the specifics of life experiences, settlement challenges and changing relations to their environment as well as the work of mobilising various parts of the community to open up and respond. Secondly, we suggest a return to a broader paradigm of community development work that allows for joined up, locality-based, capacity building work that is responsive to people, contexts and the specifics of issues emerging over time. The third argument is for a broader funding paradigm that values locality work, recognising its critical contribution to facilitating interdependent transactions between persons and their environments, to enable on-going, incremental, proactive changes at the intersections of multiple (micro, meso, macro) levels (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).
We recognise that such arguments can be considered idealistic and out of tune with contemporary funding-driven practice environments. However, we counter that social justice and social inclusion are meaningless terms outside of a deep respect for both the person and the reciprocal engagement between person and their environment.
References


http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/g/vol.php (7 February 2014)


