

UNDER THE RADAR:
TOOLKIT

WORKING WITH
REFUGEE
YOUTH
AT RISK



M Y S A
Multicultural Youth SA Inc



Auspiced by  **AUSTRALIAN**
multicultural
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INTRODUCTION

This toolkit is brought to you by Multicultural Youth South Australia Inc (MYSA), the state advisory, advocacy and service delivery body for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds aged between 12 and 30 years.

MYSA's work includes:


- Participating in and initiating research projects designed to improve understanding of the issues affecting refugee and migrant youth.
- Representing the needs of young refugees and migrants on state and national policy forums.
- Providing policy and program advice to State and Federal Government departments and the community services sector on refugee and migrant youth issues.
- Assisting and supporting service providers to work more effectively with young refugees and migrants through information provision, resource development and training.
- Providing direct services and support to young refugees and migrants to enable them to participate more fully in community life.
- Strengthening linkages and partnerships with schools, community organisations and government departments to facilitate a whole-of-community approach to meeting the needs of young refugees and migrants.

The "Under the Radar" project was funded by the Scanlon Foundation under the auspice of the Australian Multicultural Foundation Research Trust and was coordinated by Multicultural Youth South Australia Inc (MYSA) with support from a Steering Committee comprising members of the South Australian Police, the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Families SA (Youth Justice Team), Department for Families and Communities, the African Communities Council, and the Multicultural Communities Council.

The purpose of the Under the Radar project was to investigate, identify and respond to the key issues and needs impacting on the lives of at risk young people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. A combination of research and targeted program was delivered to increase support to CALD young people, the sector and the broader community. This project resulted in CALD young people at risk having greater confidence and capacity to positively participate in and contribute to community life, ultimately resulted in greater social inclusion and social cohesion.

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide service providers with information and practical strategies for engaging refugee youth at risk. Australia has welcomed over 700,000 refugees since the end of World War Two. Up to 13,000 more are added to this number each year. Children and young people have consistently represented at least 40% of all refugee arrivals to Australia over the past decade. In the last 12 months, this figure has climbed to 58%. In some newly arrived African communities, as many as 76% of refugee arrivals are children and young people.

The term "at risk youth" has traditionally been used to refer to a range of different population groups including young offenders, homeless youth, adolescents with social and behavioural problems, and teenage mothers. For the purposes of this toolkit, the term is used to refer to youth who may or may not have social, behavioural and mental health problems, but who are experiencing certain negative conditions which may make them vulnerable to such problems.



Increasing the access of youth at risk to mainstream services requires a strong commitment on the part of service providers to making the necessary changes and adjustments to fully accommodate refugee youth access. It is hoped that this toolkit will be a starting point for improving and enhancing practice.

This toolkit contains 6 modules. Module 1 introduces the concept of “access and equity”, outlines the policy framework for agencies’ access and equity obligations, and provides practical tips to enable them to make their services more accessible. Module 2 provides background information on the issues affecting at risk refugee youth. Module 3 details the findings of research undertaken by MYSA with African male youth to identify the nature and extent of social, behavioural and mental health problems. Module 4 provides practical tips and pointers for effectively engaging at risk youth. Module 5 describes the circumstances under which it may be appropriate to involve parents/caregivers in the intervention process and provides strategies to facilitate engagement. Module 6 provides program information, advice and strategies to enable service providers to increase their reach with at risk refugee youth.