



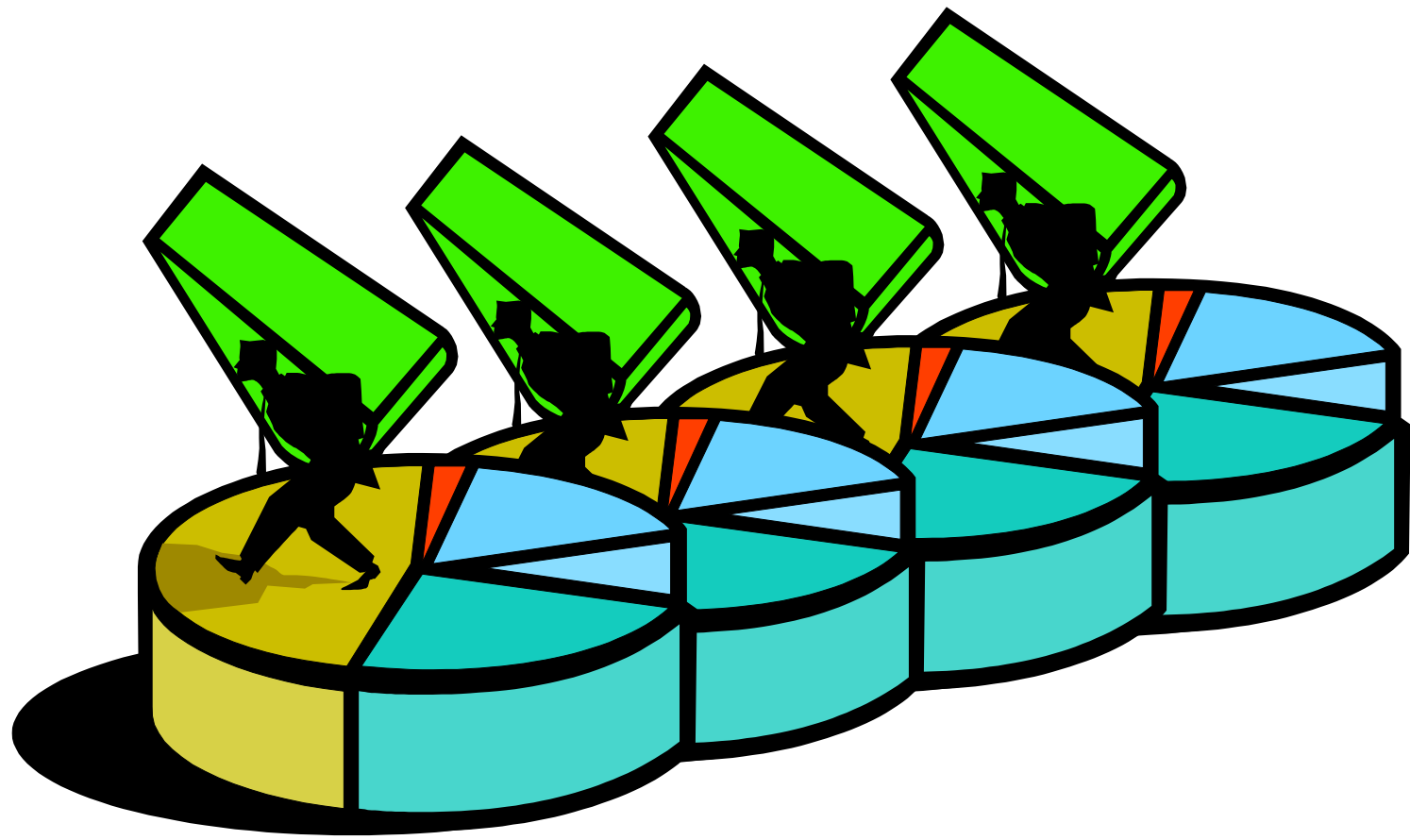
JR MCKENZIE TRUST
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Refugee Employment Programme

2001-2004

Business as usual?





Why refugees?



Why refugee employment?

- One of the most marginalised groups in the NZ employment market
- To get and keep a job – last piece of the jigsaw
- Many community groups seen to be light on capacity

Aims of the programme

- To increase the number of refugees who gain and maintain employment
- To promote sharing and collaboration
- To increase knowledge of what works well in the New Zealand context
- To promote a “learning culture” among refugee resettlement organisations

How did it work?

- Research, Board allocation
- Invited proposals, selected 5 groups
- Three year funding
- Annual workshop
- Some mentoring available
- Combined report of learning



The Journey to Work: Jobs for Refugees

Refugees are among the most marginalised groups in New Zealand in terms of the employment market. Assisting refugees and those from refugee-like circumstances into employment is the aim of a three-year programme funded by the JR McKenzie Trust. A report on the first two years of the programme reveals that:

- ✔ Negative attitudes from some employers are a significant barrier to refugee employment. Some employers tend not to employ refugees because of Occupational Safety and Health issues. Employers running small businesses do not always have the time to take refugees to make into their own workplaces.
- ✔ Barriers exist for refugees working from income support from employers. Some staff in Work and Income, the government's income support and welfare benefits agency, have positive attitudes towards refugees. There are currently insufficient incentives for refugees to move from a welfare benefit to work. It is difficult for refugees entering the workforce to find out about their ongoing benefit entitlements, and then to access them.
- ✔ Refugees often have limited knowledge of New Zealand work culture, norms and work options, and very little knowledge of trades. Gender issues, attitudes to age and attitudes to time can all raise adaptation problems for refugees. Past experience of stress has often stopped refugees' self-motivation and left them with little motivation to hope for the future.
- ✔ Lack of access to appropriate English language classes hampers refugees' access to employment.
- ✔ Women from cultures where they are traditionally disadvantaged in terms of access to education are also disadvantaged in learning English and gaining employment in New Zealand. Done cards can be used to discriminate against some groups of refugee women.
- ✔ Young people who arrive in New Zealand as teenagers are a high-risk group.
- ✔ Boarding refugees in residential areas at a distance from industrial or commercial areas can make access to employment more difficult.

This report describes the work of six organisations to improve refugees' access to employment, and what has been learned in the process. Many positive shifts have occurred.

What has happened? (1)

Service delivery:

- 125 jobs gained in first two years
- Referrals to further training
- Exploration of non traditional refugee employment options

What has happened? (2)

Development of agencies:

- Additional funding gained
- Alliances and networking
- Workshops highly valued
- Agencies still fragile – range of outcomes

What has happened? (3)

Wider influence:

- Reasonable impact – short or long term?
- Increasing focus on advocacy – policy and practice
- Mainly through publication and contractor

What have we learned?



What have we learned? (1)

- Power issue – sensitivity and care needed
- Choose the right expert/s
- It doesn't happen in a vacuum
- May require higher profile

What have we learned? (2)

- Have realistic aims considering:
 - Duration of programme
 - \$\$ and expertise available
- Funder's time required
- “Exit strategy”?

Would we work this way again?

- Yes!
- Opportunities for funders to work together
- No certainty of results, but . . .

*“You miss 100% of the shots
you never take.”*



Wayne Gretzky



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**Iti noa ana, he pito mata.
With care, a small kumara will produce a harvest.**