Possible Antecedents and Implications to African-Australians Participating in the Proposed Pilot Program of Settlement in Rural Victoria:
A Study of Strategic Management of Service Delivery to an Emerging Community in Rural Areas: A Critical Review

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Introduction and the Basis of the Study

This paper has been influenced by both the work we did on African Communities and Settlement Services Delivery in Victoria, and my participation in a number of consultations. These have included: migration and humanitarian programs and the associated settlement issues principally on behalf of African-Australians, the majority are refugees and humanitarian entrants. Also, I have been involved with the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy, Population Debate, Reviewing the Review of Settlement Services, Economic Contribution of Victoria's Culturally Diverse Population, Regional Settlement in Rural Victoria, the Victoria Racial Verification Act, Multicultural Victoria Act and How to deal with gambling and substance abuse mainly among youth.

Given the foregoing, this paper assesses a number of fundamental issues connected with newly arrived Refugee and Humanitarian entrants, mainly those from Sub-Sahara Africa. It seeks to identify the issues likely to be confronted when settling in Victorian locations such as: Shepparton, Swan-Hill, Warrnambool, Mildura or Colac, to name a few of the nine proposed places.

The paper also questions whether secondary settlement of the African Refugees and Humanitarian entrants would be an alternative and a strategic option to picking these new settlers straight from refugee camps overseas.

Over all the paper assesses whether the developments would constitute a **Strategic Management of Service Delivery to these African-Australians** in light of what is being proposed by the Federal & State Governments' pilot rural program (Refer to Chapter 8: The Integrated Humanitarians Settlement Strategy: Report on the Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants 2002/3& Victorian Government Regional Migration Incentive Strategy). An attempt is made to evaluate the strategic-ness of the development and management of the program(s). Also this paper assesses the extent by which the program(s) is/are likely to achieve the objectives, those of the local communities and the new migrants, given the antecedents (refer to Nsubuga-Kyobe and Dimock (2002:197-9) about the best model of service delivery to the African- Australians).[i]
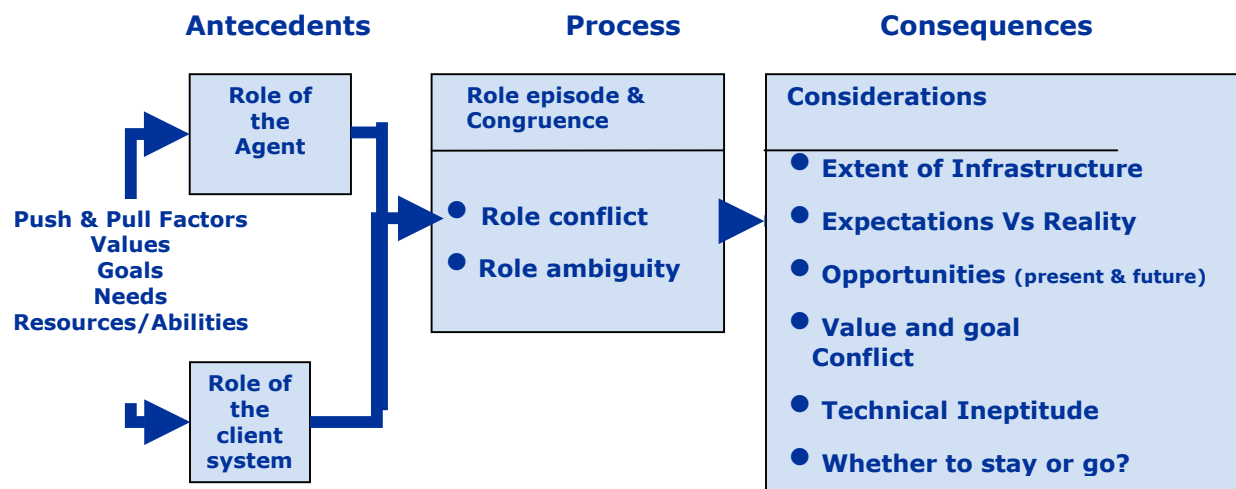
Theoretically, '**strategic management**' refers to a set of decisions and actions taken to achieve pre-set goals and objectives mainly to serve the long-term, but also the short term of the total mission (inference would be made to agents and the new settlers). The strategic-ness is usually determined by identifying the current mission, objectives, and available strategies, carrying out a SWOT analysis of

the external environment (opportunities & threats) and the internal resources (strengths & weaknesses) [Robbins, *et.al.,* 2003:223; Hanson, *et.al.,* 2002:6-7).

Essentially, this paper adds to debate and questions settling Sub-Sahara Refugee and Humanitarian Entrants in rural Victoria/Australia, whether it serves short term or long term strategy.

The following diagram encapsulates the conceptualisation of the situation and how the issues are flagged and evaluated for the purpose of this paper and the analysis.

A Model to Conceptualise Settlement in Rural Areas

Antecedents	Process	Consequences

Role of the Agent

Push & Pull Factors
Values
Goals
Needs
Resources/Abilities

Role of the client system

Role episode & Congruence

- **Role conflict**
- **Role ambiguity**

Considerations

- **Extent of Infrastructure**
- **Expectations Vs Reality**
- **Opportunities (present & future)**
- **Value and goal Conflict**
- **Technical Ineptitude**
- **Whether to stay or go?**

Highlighting the Possible Sources of the Antecedents and Implications

The above mentioned consultations assisted to identify the key challenges of settling Refugee and Humanitarian entrants in rural Victoria particularly in regard to those from Sub-Sahara Africa. These may include:

- Reciprocity in Valuing of Cultural Diversity including questions of access and equity (e.g. reluctance & lack of responsiveness to some areas of cultural diversity, that may not easily appeal to the local community) [cultural diversity is not only about food, clothing, and dance/music. It goes far beyond these commonly inferred constitutes of cultural diversity or similarly multiculturalism]

- Issues of Mainstreaming of re-settlement services; for service provision is usually based on numbers, demography, and economic benefit and in proportionate nature,

- Nature of delivery of services according to the cohorts of the respective groups, which it is generally difficult. Key problem areas generally cited include: housing, employment & its conditions, English language requirements, being accepted by the local community (fitting in), having the infrastructure[ii] (e.g. ways of sustaining identity, cultural traits, social support & vernacular languages), and other related support matters,

- Gaps and Omissions (e.g. extended family support, ethno-specific community support, and lacking relative & friend connections, & support facilities to enable adjusting to the new way of life e.g. work culture and ethics, time keeping, implication on communication styles and body language),

- Operational and Implementation considerations (whether this serves a strategic trend for the agents and migrants (services recipients),

- Varied rural contributions, support, and undertaking to holistically settle the migrants and their families, meeting the needs of the people and the adequacy of the services available (e.g. bulk billing of medical services & other). Since 2001 Warrnambool City Council has initiated, corroborated with relevant agencies and provided some infrastructure, thus has settled over 120 Refugee and Humanitarian Entrants by June 2004. Mainly they work in the meat and dairy industries there, and they include Sudanese. It is not clear whether they will stay there for long, perhaps as some stories from Colac might have suggested, they later relocate back to Melbourne for a whole host of reasons.

- Varied skill levels, abilities, age categories of Refugee and Humanitarian entrants and their relevance to available jobs,

- Tensions between service delivery for older and newer communities,

- Nature of funding and support from State and Federal Governments (e.g. DIMIA & Victoria Govt regional skilled migrants' support Vs ordinary job seekers' support),

- Access and equity from a Human Rights Perspective,

- Anglo-dominant character of the Government driven services versus the relevant cultural nature of the service recipients,

- A need to develop respective and culturally responsive nature of policies to deal with contingent settlement outcomes, and attempt to break a possibly continuing refugee culture in Australia and Isolation,

- A need to ascertain the level of contribution/importance that a culturally diverse population brings to the area where they are settled (e.g. improved productivity, increased exports, attracting foreign investment/markets, creating a competitive advantage, and measuring the actual contributions including that of the new arrivals),

- How to deal with the challenge of affinity to cultural diversity, religious values or other key/critical respective communities' passion Vs the way services may be delivered (key & broad groups of people could be the Pan Hamitic, Indo Cushitic, Bantu, San, and Pan Nilotica; for Religion, they could be Traditional Believers, African Christianity, Orthodox, Muslims, Buddhist.

The broad migration objectives on the side of agent (Government & public) include:

- Maximising migration's contribution to Australia's well-being for realisation of the economic and social potential and benefits (i.e. have mainly youthful, skilled, entrepreneurial and other types of migrants that could make an immediate contribution). This originates from multiculturalism national agenda goals and principles. These are based on three key dimensions

(rights) and obligations (limits). For 'Rights' they include: (i) holding to a 'cultural identity' or religion or language, (ii) "social justice" i.e. equal opportunity, and (iii) 'economic efficiency' i.e. use of skills, talents, & resources without being prejudiced by individual's background. For Limits they include: (i) Having multicultural policies upholding a unifying commitment to Australia, (ii) Having common policy focus that accepts the basic structures & principles of the Australian society (i.e. the Constitution, rule of law & others), and (iii) a situation of imposed obligations & rights to express ones own culture and beliefs but with a reciprocal responsibility to the rights, views, & values of the others to be freely expressed.

- Benefiting from cultural and linguistic diversity so as to facilitate business and trading relationships with the relevant countries,

- Provision of support and man power particularly to immediate family & relationships as a core foundation of the Australian society (looking after the old people or disabled persons),

- Benefiting better labour market outcomes so as to advance Australia's economy,

- Upholding of international protection or the obligation of settling displaced persons e.g. refugees and those with humanitarian concerns,

- Taking advantage of the expanding markets and global growth opportunities,

- Upholding and improving the integrity assessment of the family re-union stream and community support, and

- Replacing a rapidly ageing population; providing carers (e.g. nurses & doctors); providing active participants in the economic and social activities.

Emphasised is that Migration programs need to be carefully planned and managed in & for the national interests, balancing Australia's social economic, humanitarian and environment needs, a point that Immigration has a total benefit to Australia than to the individuals who chose to settle in his country (Refer to Dispelling the Myths about Immigration December 1997)

Methodology

In order to obtain first hand information three main methods of data collection have been used.

Firstly, extensive in-depth interviews have been held with a group of Iraqi women, men, and youths, as recent arrivals settled in the Goulburn Valley region of Victoria (Shepparton). These have been used as the sounding-board. The objective has been to capture their experiences and use these to assess the possible situations to be encountered by the African-Australians soon to be settled in the same region. However, it is noted that despite the Iraqis having came to Australia as refugees and humanitarian entrants, their background and conditions differ from those from Sub-Sahara Africa. Therefore, the experiences are used with caution.

Secondly, I have used my community participation in the various forums as another source of data through circumstance observation, attentive listening, critical thinking & questioning, and discussions.

Thirdly, a number of secondary sources have been used, including: literature search and raw data collected by Janet Taylor and Dayane Stanovic of the Brotherhood of St. Laurence, Melbourne. Their exploratory research has investigated whether settling refugees and humanitarian entrants in regional areas is leading to social inclusion or exclusion of the respective cohorts. This raw data has been collected through in-depth interviews with recent refugee and humanitarian groups, i.e. Iraqis in Shepparton, Sudanese in Warrnambool, & Colac, Ethiopians & Zimbabweans in Swan-Hill and Mildura between June to August 2004. Also regional community leaders in Shepparton, Warrnambool and Colac were interviewed. As well, Metropolitan DIMIA funded service providers linked with the said regional groups were interviewed. This Taylor and Stanovic' has well contributed to my own collections.

Responses: Summary of Interviewed Iraqis in Shepparton

The in-depth interviews have taken place from 8th to 20th November 2004 at different time, conducted on three men, three women and two youths. The objective has been to identify when they arrived in Shepparton, challenges met on arrival, in the time following, and currently. The discussion sought to identify the push and pull factors, as well as prospects for their settlement in Shepparton. Similarly this provided analysis of the challenges met (process) in their endeavour to attain their expectations. An attempt was made to capture perceptions about how fellow Iraqi community members feel in regard to living in Shepparton. Also, my focus was to assess the nature and extent of inter-personal interactions with the local community members. Additional comments were sought in order to capture anything that might not have been covered by the above discussion and questions.

In general terms, the interviewees and their families arrived in Australia after 1996, stayed in big cities like Melbourne, Sydney and others. They migrated to Shepparton after 1998 at will and out Govt incentives, a move influenced by factors like: slower country life, family values and need to keep the family unity, agricultural environment similar to what they left behind in Iraq, Islamic and other religious connections and support, possibilities of seasonal employment, prospects of personal growth, and health reasons (Shepparton has practising Iraqi Doctors).

Though the interviewed men had been professional people in their home country, initially in Shepparton they became tuned to doing any job that came their way which included working on farms. The interviewed Iraqis are mainly community workers in the Multi-cultural centre in the local TAFE campus, and other related agencies for example working on employment enhancement programs, or as interpreters, and involved with linking their community to/with other respective agencies for betterment of their personal or family environment (involved in the settlement endeavours).

The Shepparton Iraqi community is made up of members who migrated to Australia mainly in two key broad waves. The first batch was picked from refugee camps from Saudi Arabia and the second wave was those who arrived on boats seeking asylum, mainly from Iran, Syria, and Indonesia. These have generally been referred to as Temporary Protection Visa (TPVs) holders. (The conditions of the latter category influenced them to work hard on the farms, and other manual jobs).

Challenges on arrival, in the time following, and currently have been: for females who feel they are gazed at because of the differences in the way they dress, covering their head with a veil or scarves and long costumes sometimes with trouser pants inside. In the circumstances, the emotional impact of

being recognised as different was significant. Despite the emotional feeling of rejection, the Iraqis had to try hard to fit in. In the regards the pioneer men into the area took extra initiative to participate public activities, visited some sporting and rotary clubs, and became very active in the religious gatherings mainly Islamic ones. In spite of majority of them being Moslems, they would participate in some general Christian worship as a gesture of togetherness with the local community. These efforts later have paid dividends even though the Iraqis' social and cultural activities appear to be as if they are a closed-shop designated only for those persons in the Islamic faith.

Although the Iraqi pioneer group to Shepparton had migrated from Melbourne, as well housing was a major initial problem to an extent that the initial Housing Commission buildings allocated to them were virtually not habitable (very run down houses).

Further challenges included: transport, language (English despite having had classes in Melbourne). It was noted that the 510 hrs paid for by DIMIA did not offer enough English for work, conversation, and improving their skills if they want to go to school. For others who came later, literacy learning was needed despite having had free education system in Iraq, it appeared that the opportunities had not ben well used. Employment & qualification recognition has been a challenge as added to accessing local support facilities and knowing where they were. More challenges included: finding local friends, adapting to the local culture & coping with the systems, reciprocity in understanding each other's ways of life, methods of raising children and access to child care (for example to attend language and other support schools & courses) & the relevant costs, problems of mixing cultures with religion, changing roles & clash of shift between the new and old ways of doing things, and how to cope with the work ethics e.g. precisely being on time.

In regard to prospects and what has occurred over the time, Shepparton has given this emerging community some satisfaction, development and unity. For example coalitions have been formed such as that of the Iraqi Christians and Moslems. This has proved easy because the Iraqis' cultural characteristics are similar irrespective of the religious differences. An Arabic teaching school and a mosque have already been developed, linked with ethno-specific child care facilities. This works along with other mainstream child care centres. Iraqis feel settled in Shepparton and other communities' interactions are growing. Iraqis provide emotional support among them and observe their important cultural and religious festivities together with a few Australian friends.

Nevertheless, community leaders still take the initiatives to hold exchange workshops with the local Australians, visit local clubs, and mix in general public events so as to share the understanding of the respective ways of life. A number of things have been explained, to the Australians; for example why Iraqi women do not shake hands, reasons for congregating in their friends' home and talking loudly after 10.00pm. Also links have been established with a number of service providers including police.

The Multicultural Centre at the Goulburn Valley Ovens of TAFE, and the Ethnic Council of Shepparton both these agencies helped Iraqis to access services, learn English, use interpreters, build their community and self-esteem. These available support facilities became an impetus attracting an in-flow of Iraqi TPV holders, many of whom have recently been regularised. Many of these Iraqis who started up with manual jobs are now progressing into new cadres of property ownership (buying, developing, and sell houses), opening up small businesses (halal meat store, fruit & vegetable shop, grocery shop, auto spare parts selling and repair & car wash facilities). Others are intending to get

their qualifications recognised to take on new formal jobs such as teaching in secondary schools. In this regard, many are looking forward to gaining advanced English skills and are studying the essential and requirements of doing business in Australia e.g. the relevant laws and permit requirements.

Discussion of the Antecedents

Looking the antecedent as introduced above, the pilot locations were selected mainly as a result of local authority and industries putting up strong cases to both State & Federal Governments for specific needs. The argument had been that 'regional migration' would provide substantial responses to the needs, for the case of the Goulburn region (i.e. Shepparton) Iraqi TPV had made a significant contribution by working on the farms. Also, there have been some shortages in certain skills base. Therefore the arguments for regional migration have included: labour shortage, developmental & investment objectives, productivity improvement and seeking opportunities for the respective regions (i.e. for sustaining growth strategy). The first consideration was for creating trans-migration programs from big cities to regions driven by the need to re-populate and stimulate growth and employment (Warrnambool adopted this strategy), scepticism over this point a rose from the fact that young persons born and grew in the regions generally migrate to big cities. Thus, focus was drawn to new migrants who might not have had similar opportunities in the big cities. The matter was left to deeper examination.

The Government's first reaction was to question how and what direct role could be equitably played to facilitate responses to the foregoing needs, but benefiting all the involved parties (i.e. settling migrants in regional areas with minimised deprivations) [Report on the Review of Settlement Services 2002/3].

Noted - while it would be difficult to measure and identify the productivity potential in relation to specific ethnic groupings and industries, cultural diversity on its own would lead to increased productivity and other benefits in the regions. However, it could isolate and underdevelop the emerging migrant communities (Inquiry into the Economic Contribution of Victoria's Culturally Diverse Population, September 2004, p.x) especially where there is involvement of large family groups.

It was considered that future immigration intake could be comprised of a wide variety of categories, e.g. skills, regional quotas, family re-union, refugee and humanitarian entrants, and others, a situation that would further be aimed at targeting growth potentials, productivity, the slowing down of the working age population, and other factors.

It was noted that the way in which certain culturally diverse communities get established does provide important insights into the nature and extent of the economic contribution of the respective communities in the regions, and their personal growth.

It was noted that the migrant pathfinders' role is particularly important. It leads to likely success if new communities are supported through provision of appropriate resources and services (support of secondary settlement program by the African Community in Swan-Hill and Robinvale (ibid p. xi) is good example at this stage),

The Victorian Government has developed a Regional Migration Incentive Fund to be used to attract newly arrived migrants and support adaptation of the skills (for skilled migrants to the regional needs), as part of the various initiatives,

Seasonal and long-term labour shortages involving both skilled and unskilled labour had been noted as a major regional concern, which problem would be addressed by increased migration drive. The initiatives would short cut on continuing participation of illegal workers in the rural industries, and support a longer term economic growth if regional migration is encouraged.

Supply of basic facilities and services such as: housing, health services, English language support, short and long term employment opportunities, personal development, and societal & cultural tolerance, acceptance, or integration have been noted as critical, the initiatives would aim at addressing the issues.

 Lack of housing in regional centres (in the parts of Victoria) for both seasonal and permanent settlers generally has an issue. For Iraqis in Shepparton the matter had addressed through provision of a few transitional homes from the Dept of Housing and they linked to real estates with positive reference. The circumstances of the newly arrived Refugee and Humanitarian Entrants from Sub-Sahara Africa, it may be difference because of their background and lack some Australian experience, unlike the Iraqis who first gained some of it from the big cities.

Attracting more medical practitioners to the country is critical. While Governments (both State & Federal) are making an effort to deal with this problem, cost & some attitudes of the service recipients make task difficulty. It is argued that some services recipients have negative attitudes towards overseas trained medical practitioners.

Available skills, training, and qualification of culturally diverse community members are not optimally being utilised, this matter requires developing a form of pro-forma skills/qualifications recognition pathway. Then, all migrants especially those who may not have arrived through the skills stream, should be advised.

The matter of exclusion of a migrant applicant spouse's skills, training, or qualifications is a major concern particularly those in areas of short supply. They tend to be assessed only as spouse, thus incurring frustrating delays and costs in having their training, & skills be fully recognised. They pay full fees as overseas student for qualification accreditation in Australia, while on the temporary two years waiting period.

The need for migrants in regional areas to undertake bridging courses to be able to work in their respective chosen fields is generally a problem as reasonable access to tertiary facilities is often a problem or lacking.

 Delivery of English language skills - the initial 510 hours paid by DIMIA are inadequate and insufficient to participate in certain work & family commitments (e.g. helping children with home work). Other additional either evening or week-end classes may be needed to support the advancement. This matter requires immediate attention.

As a way testing out on most of these issues, some understanding was reached between the Victoria & Federal Governments to initiate pilot regional settlement points in centres such as Mildura, Shepparton, Swan-Hill, Warrnambool, Colac and others. This is the basis of this discussion.

Processes and Implementation of the Initiatives

Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants conducted between 2002/3 among others recommended to seek further opportunities to settle humanitarian entrants in regional Australia and to liaise more closely with relevant stakeholders regarding regional location where employment opportunities exist and appropriate services and community support exist or may be developed (The Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy 2004).

Special skill regional migration visa regime has been established. In order to offer assistance to rural and regional stakeholders a 'Regional Migration Strategy Unit' has been formed within DIMIA's Settlement and Planning Section, charged with responsibility to oversee the pilot programs, provide assistance in regards to visa applications (e.g. the new skilled Independent Regional Visa designed to promote direct migration to rural and regional areas by simplifying application criteria)

Significant emphasis is put to work in corroboration with others beyond DIMIA's responsibility to work on the key issues which include: employment, children and family support, youth, English language advancement, skills recognition, and how to deal with established ageing migrant communities (

It was undertaken to provide increased & improved support to humanitarian entrants, improved preparatory program of the Adult Migrant English programs, further community support through increased grants, and working with Dept. of Family & Community Services as well as Dept of Education & Training to improve services to Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants (Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants Dept. of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs 2002/3).

Through the enacting of the **<u>Racial Vilification Act</u>** and the development of the **<u>Multicultural Victoria Act,</u>** the Victoria Government is nurturing and building strong communities, encouraging respect of each individual, enhancing equality (access &equity), promoting a healthy and safe society as well as influencing all sectors of the community especially Govt Depts. to report initiatives undertaken to promote multiculturism within a period under review (refer to A Discussion Paper on the proposed Multicultural Victoria Act: Many Cultures –One Future.

The nature of refugee experience, the type of the needs, the background of the people in relation to the re-settlement processes, the availability of & access of employment and support services and the capacity of the regional communities to build the ties with the new comers of different origins. The extent of income support and other aspects of social and economic participation development in the society - all these play a role

On matters of access and equity in the way refugees from Africa are helped to settle if compared with refugees from other places. The extent of deep trauma experienced is notable; therefore it requires these refugees various forms of support including counselling during the process of settlement. The question of access of access and equity and other various supports that may be gradually perceived needed will depend on time and situations. This leaves the strategic consideration in suspense.

Limited interests have been expressed by African-Australians communities' members regarding settling in rural Victoria. Among the reasons for limited interests include access to services (present & future), issues to do the infrastructure & resources to live in rural area, local community acceptance, integrating into society is assumed to be much harder in small rural places than big cities. A few, however, would like to move to rural areas for transitional pecuniary interests for a short time. If rural

settlement was linked with faster processing of visa applications or other immediate benefits, some would take up the offer. The study being carried out by Taylor and Stanovic (Brotherhood of St Laurence, Melbourne) suggests mixed feelings based on the preliminary trials of the Sudanese in Colac, Warrnambool, and the Horn of Africa residents in Swan-Hill & Mildura)

There are a number of cultural factors that manifest in many ways and that inhibit re-settlement processes and experiences for African-Australians. These manifestations also are compounded by other matters like: the community police relationship (i.e. particularly with youth), pressure on families (marriage and inter-generational) and discrimination in relation to service provision - and where issues of equity arise. In turn, these manifestations have a psychological impact on self esteem, motivation and encouragement to engage and assuming that they will experience an unwelcoming environment.

Analysis, Implications & Possible Consequences

Role Conflict & Ambiguity:

In Nsubuga-Kyobe & Dimock (2002:186) it was noted that African-Australians have an extra-ordinary diversity with multiple ethnic groups and backgrounds, with many cultures and languages inflicted with different colonial backgrounds. This creates further complexity of colonial *lingua franca* and varying life styles. To the foregoing is added the burden of post-colonial conflict, military or repressive or corrupt regimes, weakened economies, environmental degradation, broken social orders and schooling systems and receiving people in Australia who might have acquired some form of refugee 'survival values' while running away from calamities or from or within the refugee camps.

Nsubuga-Kyobe & Dimock (2002:197) further noted that the best practice in service delivery to African-Australians often occurs where a consultative process with respective groups has taken place, and where African-Australians are involved in the delivery of the services. These services should be limited to being placed at the fringe of the mainstream ones.

These two foregoing points suggest possible role conflict and ambiguity as the African Refugee & Humanitarian entrants to be settled in rural Victoria are not yet in Australia so as to be consulted. Perhaps, to avoid undermining the efforts so far undertaken by all the parties, secondary process migration would be the best approach as Iraqis have done in Shepparton. This leaves the question of the strategic-ness of what being planned for the African Refugee & Humanitarian Entrants.

Considerations:

Infrastructure: All studies have highlighted the issue of housing especially in rural areas. The importance of housing may vary and at times outweighs unemployment. Families of the emerging African communities have generally been large. Overcrowding and lack of appropriate housing has been a common problem and is a root cause of many others including those relating to health and education. For example inadequate space for doing home work, impacts on the children & youth development. While Iraqis' background helped them to overcome the housing problem in Shepparton through referral support to real estate, this is un-likely to work with the African Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants.

Other issues of infrastructure include:

- Need for a central ethno-specific service provider or connection for various support objectives,
- Dealing with High level of health problems relative to population size due to the background (full of trauma),
- Dealing with Discrimination and lack of qualification recognition in employment and in rural where communication is hard,
- Education of the entrants, their families, children and the future development
- Building community cohesiveness and Culturally appropriate methods of dealing with family relationship problems
- Building partnerships of relative parity for own cultural sustenance and the balancing off the pressures from Australian society on African-Australian communities and individuals to conform to the main stream ways.

Expectations Vs Reality: Noted is that current policies for both skilled migrants and refugees encourage settlement in regional areas and there have been some proposals that up to 45% of new arrival that should be located in regional areas (Withers and Powell cited in Birrell 2003). The recent Review of Settlement Services recommends that DIMIA seeks further opportunities to settle humanitarian entrants (refugees) in regional Australia as well. This should be in areas where there are adequate services, including settlement services and opportunity to achieve early employment. This 'will assist humanitarian entrants to contribute and participate in Australian society as soon as possible after arrival and it will also help to build the regional economies' (DIMIA 2003, Migration p.10). *It is hard to ascertain at this stage that such expectation will be met. A number of times people encounter reality shocks. When refugees get accepted to be settled in a third country, they tend to have high expectations of a better life than that of the refugee camps and the problem countries from where they are fleeing. Hardly any considerations initially arise on matters of gradual intervening factors e.g. post arrival situations, technical ineptitude or questions of fit for the climate, values & goals. For youth members of the families, the system of schooling and demands of it in Australia is unknown.*

In the past, the young persons would initially go to English classes, after which he/she could be graded (put in class level) according to his/her age, a situation that might not have implied a relative knowledge and competencies of the level. In the metropolitan areas this problem interrupted some youth schooling and spent their days hanging around shopping centres, because they got embarrassed being in class where they could not cope with the studies.

Opportunities, Values and Goal Conflict: Taylor and Stanoviv (June to August 2004) have carried out an exploratory research study, to investigate issues of social inclusion and exclusion for refugees with a focus on regional settlement. In their notes of two recent refugee groups and their settlement experiences in selected areas of regional Victoria (Iraqis in Shepparton and Sudanese in Warrnambool and Colac). A quote from Sudanese in Colac

> *"It is very difficult to settle in a place where you don't know anyone. This is why I came here … two of them came here to Colac and then they settled here. So they were working where they are still working now. Then we rung them, we asked them if there's plenty of jobs, would you give us some information. They give us information. And so as brothers, because we are cousins, and then that's why we come."*

While both Federal & State Govts are endeavouring to improve opportunities to access more support services in these regions, employment in fruit growing regions e.g. Shepparton, Mildura, and Swan-Hill tends to be seasonal unlike meat works in Colac. Generally, this type of work is perceived as transitional, they aspire to further education to get better jobs and move else where for greater horizons. It is evident that opportunities for adult men, women, and youth are different given the scenarios of Colac and Warrnambool Sudanese. These circumstances are likely to cause tensions in future, therefore affect settlement. Note their responses:

> ***The best things about living in Colac*** *for the men, apart from employment, were the cheaper cost of living, ease of transport and convenience and assistance from the community. Some emphasised the difficulties of living in a big city without a car, the cost of train travel to work, while in Colac they could get a lift with a relative, walk or use a bicycle.*

> *For the women the best things about Colac were their husbands working, and for some this was the only reason to be there. Others were very positive about help they had received from the community, in particular from the church, which not only had provided sewing classes, assistance with shopping and trips to the beach but had given them time for their own church service in the Nuer language.*

> ***The settlement balance:*** *Colac, in supplying employment for the men, was meeting their needs for the moment. A current major issue was housing, there were also issues of the women needing interpreters and English classes. For the future, the continuing availability of work and access to further education would be key issues in whether the families remained in Colac.*

Final comments, Conclusions and Recommendations

Several participants offered comments and recommendations for consideration by both government and non-government agencies. They can be summarised as follows:

1. DIMIA's and Victoria State Govts work and consultation has been commended as a way to move forward. Strongly recommend continued consultations by the working groups, especially with community groups; there are many issues that require constant consultation and review.

2. There needs to be substantial, independent research into re-settlement, more than task forces and consultation processes. There are no grants for re-settlement research, including research into re-settlement indicators and the after effects.

3. It is positive to target disadvantaged groups – humanitarian and refugee entrants. Therefore recommendation and initiatives of support concerning the special humanitarian intake should be given more attention and recommendation 7 (focus on indicators of disadvantage) need much work.

4. The role of high level taskforce will be crucial for implementation of the recommendations. It will be very important for this taskforce to link in very quickly with other reviews currently underway

in key departments, especially the Department Family and Community Services, Health and Aged Care. These departments have immense roles to play and they are very well resourced.

5. While the role of the high level task force will be pivotal, it will also be necessary for DIMIA to take the lead in encouraging other departments to include re-settlement services and responding to cultural and linguistic diversity firmly on their agendas. Two reasons were mentioned. First, because for re-settling communities, the starting point is DIMIA and second, there are resistances within the other state and federal departments.

6. Re-settlement service providers, including ethno-specific service providers, noted the deep concerns about the possibility of losing funding and the fundamental insecurity and other impacts this will have on their capacity to deliver services.

7. There needs to be balance of economic rationalism with genuine support for re-settlement needs.

8. Key points discussed in relation to Mainstreaming

    •   Lack of responsiveness to cultural diversity in mainstream services prevents older communities from transferring away from re-settlement services
    •   The relationship between ethno-specific services and DIMIA unclear
    •   There are contradictions in the Review concerning role of MRCs in promoting mainstreaming in other services
    •   The Anglo-dominant character of government departments and re-settlement services poses cultural issues for responding to cultural diversity
    •   Re-settlement and cultural diversity issues need to be on the main agenda of all government departments and service providers
    •   The role of the high level task force will be crucial to implementation of mainstreaming re-settlement services and cultural diversity
    •   Independent research and monitoring mechanisms for mainstreaming need to be ensured
    •   Timing is crucial if DIMIA is to contribute important policy reviews currently underway in other key departments

Key Emphasis with Regional/Rural Victoria

+   The Pull Migration & Settlement Factors to Regional Victoria need to be linked with characteristics of the cohort and their aspiration in the new settlement.

(How the foregoing relate to migrant communities of Humanitarian & refugee Background (Cases for analysis Iraqis in Shepparton region and not anywhere else in Victoria rural areas). The background and mind sets are different

(Receptiveness by the local communities of migrant groups, support and infrastructure available to support these new arrivals and what facilitates them to stay. The future of their children

(Family tensions that arise out of this settlement, given what services and resources may be available to them e.g. medical services & cost to access it, means of transport &

communications to access other services, schools, religious bondages, social support, English for living and further personal development

(Youth Issues, Education, & growth

(Ethnic farmers, language, and other forms of support to carry out farming to the environmentally recommended standards, as well as use of chemicals - all in commercial & technical English not known to them,

(Quality of life.

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[i] Nsubuga-Kyobe and Dimock (2002:197-9) noted that the best practice in service delivery to African-Australians often occurs where a consultative process with respective groups has taken place, and where African-Australians are involved in the delivery of the services. These services should limit being placed at the fringe of the mainstream.

[ii] This term "infrastructure" covers a wide range of support requirement that assist people to live their every day lives in relatively happy and reasonable environment. Further discussion is to be pursued in connection with this matter.