Mercy Foundation Forum Connecting & Collaborating





What we'll cover

- ASC Vision, the people we serve and what we do
- Three collaboration projects:
 - Health Service collaborations
 - ASC & RACS partnership
 - Advocacy collaborations



Asylum Seekers Centre

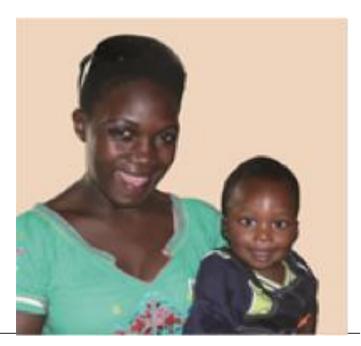
Our Vision

"Asylum seekers are welcomed and allowed to heal in safety and freedom while they rebuild their lives as valuable members of our community."

Key Objectives

The Asylum Seekers Centre provides practical and personal support for asylum seekers living in the community.

- Meet <u>human rights</u> needs
- Secure justice
- Assist in <u>rebuilding</u> lives
- Provide a <u>community</u>



Asylum Seekers Centre

The people we serve:

- > 1,400 asylum seekers assisted in 2013 / 2014
- 50% have no work right
- 70% are denied Government support
- 35% have no Medicare





HEALTH SERVICE COLLABORATIONS

Health Service Collaborations

CHALLENGE:

- * 85% have chronic physical health issues
- 98% require mental health support
- 60% have language barriers to treatment
- 35% have no Medicare



Health Service Collaborations

SOLUTION: Innovative partnerships and collaborations:

- Onsite clinics: Engaged pro bono health providers to provide 3500 health consultations in 2013/14
- Specialists: Advocated for fee waivers with 28 specialist referrals
- Pathology: Negotiated fee waivers with a private company
- Xrays & Scans: Negotiated fee waivers with St Vincents Private
- Pharmaceuticals: Negotiated with St Vincents and Royal Prince Alfred to get at cost pharmaceuticals



Asylum Seekers Centre & Refugee Advice & Casework Service Partnership

Asylum Seekers Centre & Refugee Advice & Casework Service

CHALLENGE:

- In March 2014 the Government withdrew funding
- At ASC 46% of clients were likely to lose Legal support
- Migration Agents such as RACS would lose IAAAS funding
- 90% of clients were unable to prepare applications as illiterate in English



Asylum Seekers Centre + Refugee Advice & Casework Service

SOLUTION:

- ASC received a grant from Thomas Foundation to fund a lawyer
- ASC and RACS negotiated a secondment of 2 lawyers part time to ASC
- Benefits to ASC=
 - Access to free legal assistance & referral pathways for all clients
 - ASC Legal Service staffed by highly skilled migration lawyers
 - RACS policies and processes were transferred to ASC
 - Volunteers are trained by RACS

Asylum Seekers Centre + Refugee Advice & Casework Service

SOLUTION:

Benefits to RACS:

- Salaries of solicitors are covered by ASC
- The burden of funding cuts and policy changes shared with the ASC Legal Service

Referrals to RACS are made with a high quality brief and supporting

documents





ADVOCACY COLLABORATIONS

Advocacy Collaborations

CHALLENGE:

How can we put a human face to asylum seekers living in the community to show our common humanity in a way that transcends politics.



Advocacy Collaborations

SOLUTIONS:

Wendy Sharpe "Portraits of Humanity"

- Archibald prize winner Wendy Sharpe is drawing 39 asylum seekers and refugees for a major exhibition in February/March 2015
- The Muse Gallery at TAFE Sydney has partnered with us to provide an exhibition space at no charge
- Art suppliers have provided donated materials



Advocacy Collaborations

SOLUTIONS:

Short documentary

- A group of volunteer documentary and film makers agreed to make a short documentary
- Their aim was to tell the stories of:
 - Why people are forced to flee their countries of origin
 - Their experience since arriving in Australia
- They have completed the first stage of this project.



THANK YOU

www.asylumseekerscentre.org.au 02 9078 1900