



Building a New Life in Australia (BNLA): The Longitudinal Study of Humanitarian Migrants



Overview

Building a New Life in Australia (BNLA) is the first comprehensive study of its kind in more than a decade, studying how humanitarian migrants settle into a new life in Australia.

This longitudinal study is being conducted over at least five years, with annual data collections spanning participants' early months in Australia, through to their eligibility for citizenship. Data collection commenced in 2013.

Purpose of the study

- To identify factors that either help or hinder the successful settlement of humanitarian migrants.
- To generate a valuable longitudinal evidence-base which will assist Government to design new policies and improve programmes for future humanitarian migrants.

Study participants

The study cohort comprises more than 1,500 migrating units¹, approximately 2,400 individuals, who were granted a permanent humanitarian visa in the three to six months prior to commencement. Study participants live in large and small communities around Australia, across most states and territories, with most living in Melbourne and Sydney.

These humanitarian migrants have diverse backgrounds and experiences, coming from 35 different countries and varied cultural backgrounds. Close to 50 different languages are spoken by the participants, and at commencement, their ages ranged from 15 to 83 years. Almost all had arrived in Australia in 2013 to start a new life, escaping trauma and persecution before their arrival.

Data collection

Information is collected annually via alternating waves of home visits (waves 1, 3 and 5) and telephone interviews in (waves 2 and 4). Data is collected annually between October and March.

In wave 1, the survey and participant materials were translated from English into 14 different languages, with around 90% of participants completing the survey in a language other than English in the first wave. The most common languages were Arabic and Persian.

More information on the survey is available at

<http://www3.aifs.gov.au/bnla/> or at www.dss.gov.au/nclld

Stay connected

NCLD@dss.gov.au

www.dss.gov.au/NCLD

<http://thesource.dss.gov.au>

¹ A migrating unit is the grantee of a humanitarian visa plus others — typically immediate family members — accompanying the visa holder to Australia.

Study Content Overview

Housing and neighbourhood

- Assistance in finding housing
- Number of times moved home
- Tenure type
- Quality of housing
- Number of bedrooms
- Neighbourhood characteristics

English language proficiency

- Languages spoken at home
- English language proficiency
- Whether attending English language classes
- Use and helpfulness of interpreting services

Employment and income

- Current employment status
- Employment characteristics
- Prior occupation and work experience before coming to Australia
- Experience of unemployment in Australia
- Income and government benefits received
- Financial strain

Health

- Physical and mental health
- Life stressors and coping

Self-sufficiency

- Experiences and ease of accessing services
- Information and transport
- Barriers to service use

Community support

- Levels of support from national, religious and other community group
- Involvement in community activities
- Ease of making friends
- Sense of belonging in Australia
- Social networks available upon arrival

Child-specific elements

- Use of English and language of family
- School enrolment and year level
- School absenteeism
- Delinquent behaviour
- Awards/recognition/academic achievement
- Parental warmth and discipline.

Personal resources and life satisfaction

- Satisfaction with current life and situation
- Self-concept
- Self-efficacy
- Levels of trust in different community groups and organisations
- Experience of discrimination

Family composition and demographics

- Age
- Gender of family members
- Country of birth
- Marital status

Education and training

- Highest level of education achieved
- Current education and training undertaken
- Educational aspirations
- Previous qualifications gained prior to arrival in Australia
- Whether previous qualifications have been recognised

Life before Australia

- Life before settling in Australia including countries resided in prior to arrival
- The experience of deprivation or trauma
- Time spent and type of services accessed in refugee camps, Australian detention centres or community detention
- Reasons for migrating to Australia
- Immigration experience

Life in Australia

- Expectations of life in Australia before arrival
- Factors promoting or hindering settlement
- Ease of settling in Australia