

A photograph showing several hands of different people cupped together, holding a small green seedling with soil. The background is blurred, showing parts of people's clothing like a blue shirt and a red polka-dot shirt. The overall tone is warm and supportive.

# Motivation of **Volunteers** and **Refugee Settlement Service Providers** in Australia

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# Volunteering and Refugee Settlement

Australia currently **resettles** around **18,000 officially recognised refugees** per year.

Australia offers those refugees a **new home** and a **range of services to assist** them with **settling and building a new life.**

Volunteers support the refugee settlement sector in large numbers.

# Research Questions

What motivates volunteers to engage with service providers?

What motivates service providers to engage with volunteers?



# Method

Semi-Structured Interviews

**Two Groups:** Volunteers and Settlement  
Service Providers

**Volunteers:** 21 Interviews

**Service Providers:** 15 Interviews



# Findings

- Self-Oriented Volunteer Motivation
- Other-Oriented Volunteer Motivation
- Connection
- Service Provider Motivation



# Self-Oriented Motivation of Volunteers

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Career Enhancement

Belonging

Learning About Diverse

Cultures

Socialising

Purpose and Meaning

Guilt

## **Age and Migration Background Matter**

**Migration Background  
influences motivation  
to volunteer in  
refugee settlement**

**Age influences  
motivation category**



## Other-Oriented Motivation of Volunteers

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**Everyone wants to help.**

That can be

- as first responder (usually people in refugee communities)
- by giving back (usually second-generation immigrants or migrants who have been in Australia for longer)
- social justice inspired helping
- apolitical helping



## Helping is great, but...

**Volunteer Exhaustion**

**White Saviourism**

# Connection as Underlying Theme

**Connection** is also the **essence of volunteering** – what keeps individuals engaging.

The influential **Indicators of Integration** from the UK Home Office point out that **connection** within own ethnic communities, with other communities and higher authorities is **crucial for settlement.**



## Volunteers connect with

**refugees**

**other volunteers**

**service providers**

**institutions**

A background image showing several hands of different skin tones reaching towards the center, forming a circle. The hands are positioned around the text, with some pointing towards the center and others slightly away. The overall tone is light and positive.

# Motivation of Service Providers

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Meeting organisational needs (stretching funding)

Encouraging connections

Offering empowerment opportunities

Providing pathways into paid employment in refugee settlement

# Encouraging Connections

within the community

with employers

with Australian society

# Summary

Volunteer motivation has self-oriented and other-oriented aspects. Commonly shared is the **wish to help**.

The **essence of volunteering is connection**. Connection is also **crucial for refugee settlement**.

Many **service providers** understand that crucial role and **engage volunteers beyond organisational needs**.



**Thank you!**



# References

Ager, A. and A. Strang (2004) *Indicators of Integration: Final Report*. London: Home Office, Research, Development and Statistics Directorate.

Ndofor-Tah, C., A. Strang, J. Phillimore, L. Morrice, L. Michael, P. Wood and J. Simmons (2019) *Home Office Indicators of Integration Framework 2019*. London, UK: Home Office.

