

# Centre for Refugee Employment, Advocacy, Training and Education

Re-establishing livelihoods, rebuilding lives



# CREATE

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# A shared global challenge

**We are currently witnessing the largest forced displacement of people in history. At the start of 2020 there were over 79.5 million displaced people globally and of those, 26 million are officially registered under the United Nations mandate as refugees, with 52% under the age of eighteen. This is a population equal to the size of Australia.**

Just as we ask how we can continue to provide immediate material aid to refugees, it is critical that we find lasting, sustainable solutions to support their resettlement and the re-establishment of their livelihoods. To do this, refugees and those seeking asylum must have the opportunity to become self-reliant after leaving their home country. Refugee response efforts need to shift from providing immediate humanitarian aid, to the provision of long-term support.

One of the most significant challenges faced by people from a refugee background is achieving post-resettlement employment that matches their skills and abilities. They face huge barriers in obtaining employment on

arrival in host countries, like Australia, due to a lack of local work experience and local networks; a lack of knowledge on workplace culture and systems; and the non-recognition of their skills, qualifications and experience from overseas. A significant proportion of people from a refugee background are unemployed, underemployed, underpaid or work in the informal economy with the limited protection this gives them.

Research tells us that just seventeen percent of people from a refugee background get a paid job within 18 months of arriving in Australia. Ensuring many more refugees find meaningful employment not only benefits the individuals themselves, but has huge benefits to the wider Australian economy; it reduces the need for social security support, contributes to economic output, builds the tax-base and improves social cohesion. Australian communities and businesses benefit from accessing a larger, more diverse talent pool with a broader range of experiences.

What's more, refugees display characteristics and demographics which make them highly desirable employees. Refugees display greater entrepreneurial qualities than other migrants, generating a far higher proportion of their income from their own businesses which in

turn contributes to broader economic growth\*. They volunteer at higher rates than Australian-born citizens and are highly active in other forms of community engagement. Their uptake of Australian citizenship is higher than any other migrant group, reflecting integration into Australian communities and culture. They also tend to be proportionately younger than the broader Australian population with more prime working years ahead of them.

With more than fifty percent of the world's refugees under eighteen, the world is faced with the massive need to support these young people to access education to facilitate their integration into society and secure their futures. At present only three percent of young refugees can access tertiary education, compared to thirty-seven percent of the general population. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has a goal of fifteen percent of eligible refugees to be in tertiary or connected higher education in host countries by 2030. We are a long way from this right now.

\* Deloitte Access Economics – Economic and Social Impact of Increasing Australia's Humanitarian Intake, 2019.

# We dare to dream

At Deakin University's Centre for Refugee Employment, Advocacy, Training and Education (CREATE) we dare to dream of a world where all refugees have access to education and employment, no matter where they were born or what circumstances they come from. The fact that refugees have made their way to Australia despite war, persecution and prejudice demonstrates that they have courage, resilience, determination and commitment – qualities needed in any society.

The work of CREATE is unique in that it builds a number of nationwide education and employment programs, based on insights gained from world-leading research. Through building this critical evidence base of what works – and what doesn't – we partner in delivering practical insights and programs with government, service providers, educational institutions, and employers across the nation to help them help refugees to forge future careers and serve their communities.

The work we are leading is building towards a national – and, we hope, ultimately global – response to ensure people from refugee backgrounds fleeing persecution are supported to successfully integrate into host societies. CREATE is helping refugees have the capabilities to enrich their lives, and the communities they are a part of, economically, socially and culturally.

We believe in creating a world in which a young Hazara girl fleeing persecution in Afghanistan one day becomes a leading international surgeon. We believe that a young South Sudanese boy escaping internal warfare and desertification, can one day become the Prime Minister of Australia.

We need your help to achieve this.



# A sustainable solution

What we are currently witnessing in terms of global migration will be with us for many years to come. Civil unrest, climate change and war will continue to displace people, forcing them to flee across borders.

A refugee system developed nearly 70 years ago (the 1951 Refugee Convention) is no longer fully fit for today's globalised world. Supporting refugees today is so much more than providing material aid; it is about restoring an individual's autonomy and integrating them into society through empowering routes to meaningful employment and access to education. This is an approach where everyone gains because if refugees are given the chance to help themselves they invariably make a greater contribution to our economy and society overall.

Economic modelling by the Centre for Policy Development and Boston Consulting Group\* indicates that an improvement of 25% in the labour market outcomes for just one year's intake of refugees would lead to \$175 million budget savings for the Australian Government over the next decade, as well as a collective \$465 million rise in income for those new arrivals. Yet in Australia – as in many other countries – there is limited support for skilled refugees to gain meaningful employment post-arrival, as well as for individuals in refugee camps to prepare for employment pre-arrival.

It is precisely this challenge CREATE seeks to address, through the continued development of sustainable research-based education solutions and employment programs that support refugees to seek employment or start their own business once arriving in a host country. These programs are a mix of both in-person and online, blending onshore and offshore opportunities that work best with the status and needs of the individual.

CREATE is the only applied research centre in the world that seeks to embrace and build the skills, knowledge and employability of those arriving on new shores, no matter why, how or when. It is a centre that is working presently in Australia and, with the right support, we believe can operate effectively across the world.

In developing and scaling-up such programs, CREATE seeks to work increasingly with government, non-profit partners and other agencies in the refugee support sector. Their expertise and networks are vital if we are to embed these programs into practice and policy worldwide, breathing new hope into overburdened systems, whilst transforming lives and communities forever.

\*Centre for Policy Development and Boston Consulting Group – Settling Better Report, Centre for Policy Development, 2017



## Supporting future generations

CREATE has been working primarily at a Victorian level, and is now building to become a national platform. Our ambitions are to increasingly embed our programs at a national level, and grow to a more transformational, global model. This requires the Centre to be resourced to ensure increased capacity and capability over the next five years.

Our work will focus on the multiple activities needed to radically transform the way our society views and supports people from a refugee background:

- Research to continue building a robust evidence base of what refugee-focused education and employment programs work, and can be scaled
- Collaboration to build broader networks and facilitate deeper trust between and among researchers and service providers
- Advocacy to change hearts and minds at political and social levels

To ensure this happens, we seek a multifaceted approach to sustaining and scaling CREATE people and programs.

A range of philanthropic opportunities exist to ensure CREATE can continue to grow and change the lives of many more refugees into the future.

### A Professorial Chair to lead CREATE

A Professorial Chair provides critical leadership and positioning of CREATE to build its research base, applied programs, partnerships and advocacy. A gift of \$6M would endow the Chair in perpetuity; a gift of \$1.25M would support the position for a five-year term.

### Supporting and scaling CREATE's applied research and advocacy program

CREATE people and projects will continue to lead the change for refugee-focused education and employment programs. A gift of \$12.5M would endow CREATE and ensure its sustainable, long-term future; a gift of \$2.5M would support the Centre people and activities for a five-year term.

This would ensure:

- Employment of key research staff (CREATE Centre Manager, Post-doctoral research fellow, PhD scholar, and 2 x Research Assistants)
- Delivery of CREATE research projects that continue building the evidence base around refugee education and employment
- Delivery of the CREATE Global Research Challenge: three research projects annually on issues related to education and employment for those from a refugee background
- Twice-weekly national employment and career clinics to support refugees
- Development of refugee-oriented short online courses focusing on topics such as financial literacy, information technology and starting your own business
- Development of annual partners workshop on issues around refugee education and employment.

Each of these activities could also be enabled through smaller philanthropic gifts.

# The Deakin CREATE leadership team



**Professor Alex Newman,**  
Associate Dean (International)  
Faculty of Business and Law at  
Deakin University.

Professor Newman has pioneered a programme of research that examines how we can support the integration of refugees and asylum seekers into the Australian workforce. From 2014–2017 he led an Australian Research Council funded research project examining the factors that underlie successful refugee integration in the Australian workplace, which developed a training programme focusing on building resilience and other psychological resources of refugees. He is recognised globally as a research leader in refugee employment and careers and has published extensively in high-impact journals in the field of employment, migration, careers and organizational psychology.



**Dr Karen Dunwoodie**  
Research Fellow  
Deakin Business School

Dr Karen Dunwoodie is a Research Fellow and co-founder of Deakin CREATE. Over many years in the tertiary education and corporate sectors, Karen has acquired a tremendous breadth and depth of knowledge and experience working with diverse communities. In addition to her role at CREATE, Karen consults and volunteers at a number of refugee and asylum seeker agencies in Melbourne. Karen's research includes examining the experiences of recently arrived refugees and their attempts to access tertiary education; as well as investigating why some employers may or may not be actively including people with a refugee background, as part of their employment diversity and inclusion strategies.



**Dr Jo Ingold**  
Associate Professor  
Deakin Business School

Dr Jo Ingold is an Associate Professor of Human Resource Management at Deakin Business School. Jo has spent over two decades working in the area of employability and skills services, including in government and the non-profit sector. Jo's research interests include the workplace inclusion of disadvantaged labour market groups, including refugees and she has worked with governments and providers to improve their service provision.



**Dr Luke Macaulay**  
Research Fellow  
Deakin Business School

Dr Luke Macaulay is a Research Fellow and the coordinator of the careers clinic for people from a refugee background at Deakin CREATE. Luke's PhD research explored the experiences and perspectives of Australian Sudanese and South Sudanese youths in Melbourne, regarding the transition to adulthood. Luke has a number of years' experience working with and advocating alongside African Australian communities from refugee backgrounds, particularly in the areas of youth employment and education.

## About CREATE

CREATE was established in early 2019 and has had significant impact on the lives of people from a refugee background. It has launched a career clinic program in three locations in Victoria, where over 150 people a year are supported to find employment and re-established their livelihoods. CREATE has also produced an employment guide to educate employers on the benefits of hiring people from a refugee background and the steps they might take to do so. In addition, it has published guides for people from a refugee background looking to access higher education in Australia and for higher education institutions on how to best support such individuals. This, in conjunction with information workshops hosted by Deakin on how to access higher education, has assisted many individuals over the past several years in gaining access to higher education and scholarships – especially targeting refugees and people seeking asylum.

## CREATE was co-founded and is co-led by Professor Alex Newman and Dr Karen Dunwoodie

Other members of the research centre include Dr Lee Martin, Dr Shiri Krebs and Dr Siew Mee Barton. CREATE also employs Research Assistants from a refugee background and has recently collaborated with Curtin University Centre for Human Rights and the Departments of Psychology and Social Work at Deakin to provide internships and professional placements for postgraduate students.

"I was alone in Melbourne. I had very few friends and did not know I was allowed to attend university. No-one in my family had ever finished school let alone attended uni. I had no-one to help and nowhere to go – I was scared. You made me feel safe and supported me. You helped me with my studies and to get a job on campus. I feel like I belong somewhere now. My head no longer hurts every morning when I wake up; my life has been transformed."

Murteza (pseudonym) a former Hazara refugee from Afghanistan – currently studying the Juris Doctor postgraduate degree

## Transforming lives and communities through CREATE

If you share our passion for making a long-term difference to the lives of refugees and the communities they seek to call home, please consider joining us in our mission of change. As CREATE seeks to scale its impact, philanthropic support matters more than ever – especially post COVID-19 – to deliver on a shared vision to change the future lives of refugees through education and employment. With your support, we intend to build a better and richer future for us all.

### Please contact

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