

Ministry of Education support for refugee background students and their families in New Zealand schools

Presentation for Refugee Research Symposium
3 December, 2015

I will cover the following:

- Overview of diversity in our schools
- Key challenges
- Existing MOE policies and programmes for refugee education support
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Recent research on refugee education
- Gaps in research and future interventions



Diversity in our local schools





ESOL funded students: Statistical Information

Major Ethnic Groups in New Zealand schools

- Samoan (18 %)
- Chinese (13.6 %)
- Indian (10.8 %)
- Tongan (10.6 %)
- Filipino (8 %)
- Fijian Indian (4.4 %)
- Korean (3.1 %)

Over 36,000 are receiving ESOL funded support

48% NZ born

52% overseas born



These students represent:

- 163 different ethnic groups
 - 165 different countries of birth
 - 127 different languages
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Refugee background students

Major Ethnic Groups of Refugee Background Students

Myanmarese/Burmese	268
Afghan	238
Colombian	169
Bhutanese	103
Ethiopian	82
Somali	77
Iraqi	59
Nepalese	48
Chin	47
Sri Lankan	46
Syrian	30
Sudanese	24
Congolese	22
Assyrian	18
Eritrean	17

- over 2,750 refugee background students in the compulsory school sector
- 1,426 are receiving ESOL funded support

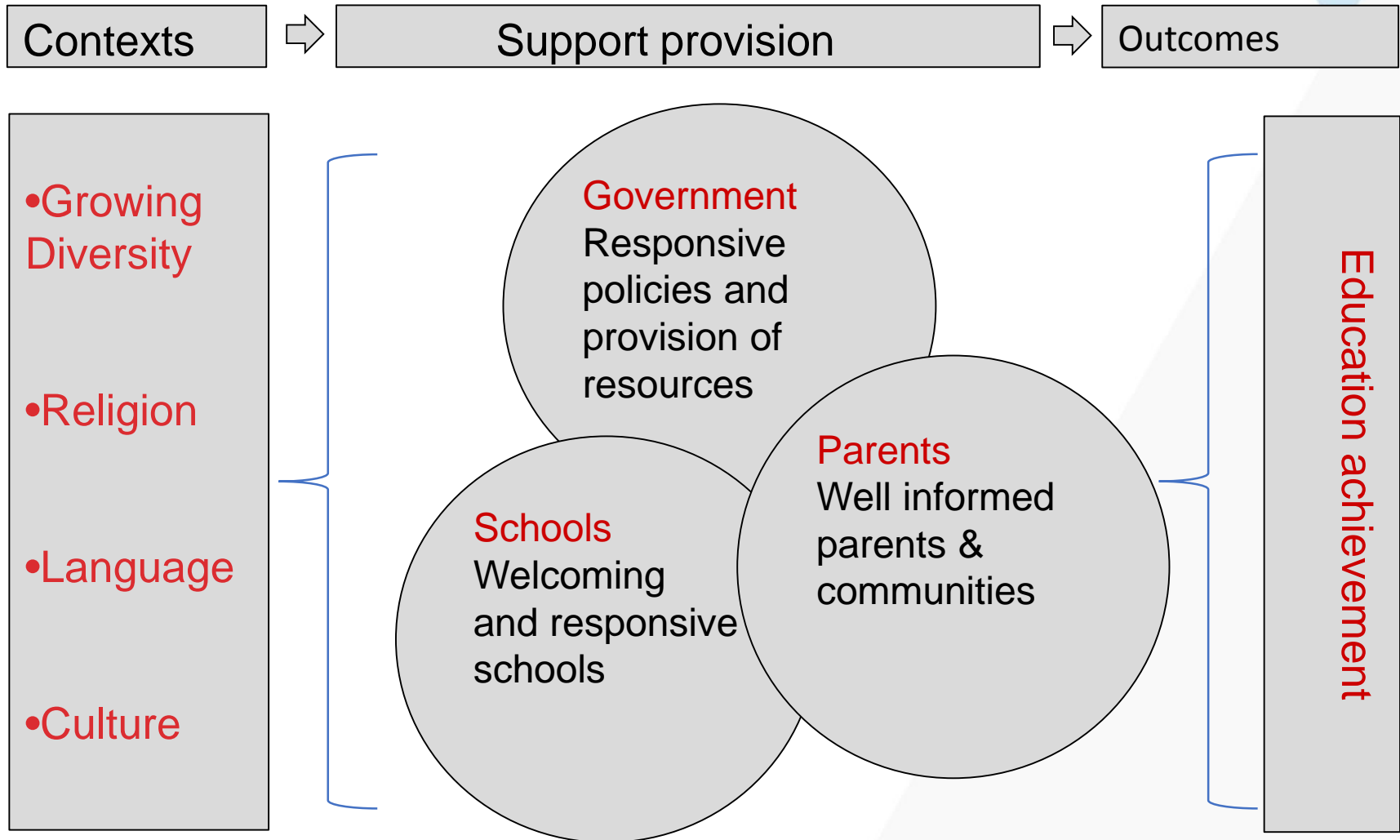
Refugee background students: the challenges

Some of the challenges the students have to overcome include:

- trauma experienced in refugee camps
- disrupted education background or no prior schooling
- language barrier
- having to adjust to a different educational system
- culture shock: fitting into a new culture while maintaining own culture
- limited resources and academic support from home



Integrated Education Support Model



Additional support initiatives

Senior Advisers: Refugee and Migrant Support in the Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington and Christchurch Ministry offices liaise with schools and communities to provide information and ensure the learning needs of students are met.

They assist schools with:

- promoting partnerships between schools, families and communities in responding to education related issues
- providing assistance to schools for working with refugee background students
- providing information about schooling in New Zealand
- assisting with schooling related settlement support for refugee background students



Additional support initiatives

Refugee Flexible Funding Pool (\$680K annually)

This provides additional funding to schools to provide the extra support that refugee students need in order to achieve in mainstream education through:

- co-ordination and development of individual educational plans
- homework programmes for academic support for secondary students
- the employment of bilingual liaison workers to engage with the families, and liaise with school staff on the needs of refugee students
- supporting the participation of refugee children in early childhood education programmes
- youth mentoring programmes

Bilingual tutor support (\$345K annually)



Additional support initiatives

Refugee Pathways and Careers Support (\$300K annually)

Additional funding is available to targeted secondary schools to provide additional pathway planning and career support for students from refugee backgrounds. The initiative provides for :

- individual course guidance leading to appropriate learning and qualification pathways
- ongoing guidance from careers counsellors.
- the provision of information and involvement of parents.



Additional support initiatives

Refugee **Computers in Homes** (\$300K annually)

The project aims to empower refugee background communities by providing them with the tools and skills to participate in online activities.



Resources for schools

A Refugee Handbook for Schools:

Gives schools guidance on making effective provision for refugee background students. The material:

- focuses on developing programmes which support students with a range of social and academic needs
- supports schools in meeting the particular needs of students especially at key transition points
- emphasises the importance of providing family support and developing wider community networks

New to NZ and Defining Diversity:

Provide information about some ethnic groups living in New Zealand and support schools in developing culturally responsive practices.

Resources for schools

Multilingual notices and forms help schools to communicate more effectively with the families of English language learners. These include notices and forms about:

- background information of students
- missing documents
- school camp or trips
- parent–teacher meetings
- parent participation
- attendance records
- excellent school reports
- school report identifying concerns.

Available in:

Burmese

Chinese

Farsi

German

Japanese

Korean

Samoan

Somali

Vietnamese

Well informed and engaged parents

School based support

School refugee coordinators
Language and cultural brokers
Recognition and celebration of diversity

Provision of Information

Access to information in first languages

MOE Senior Advisers: Refugee and Migrant Support

To support effective liaison between students, families and communities and schools.



Empowering parents to become effective partners in their children's education

Information for families and communities



Teachers and bilingual support workers working together to present NCEA Information sessions for parents at Hagley College

Translated resources for families and communities

- The ***Families Learning Together*** booklets
- ***Supporting Your Child's Learning*** booklets and ***How Well is My Child Doing?***
- **NCEA booklet:** explains what NCEA is all about for students and their families.
- ***NCEA: information for parents:*** simplified two paged information on NCEA for refugee background parents and is available in most refugee languages.



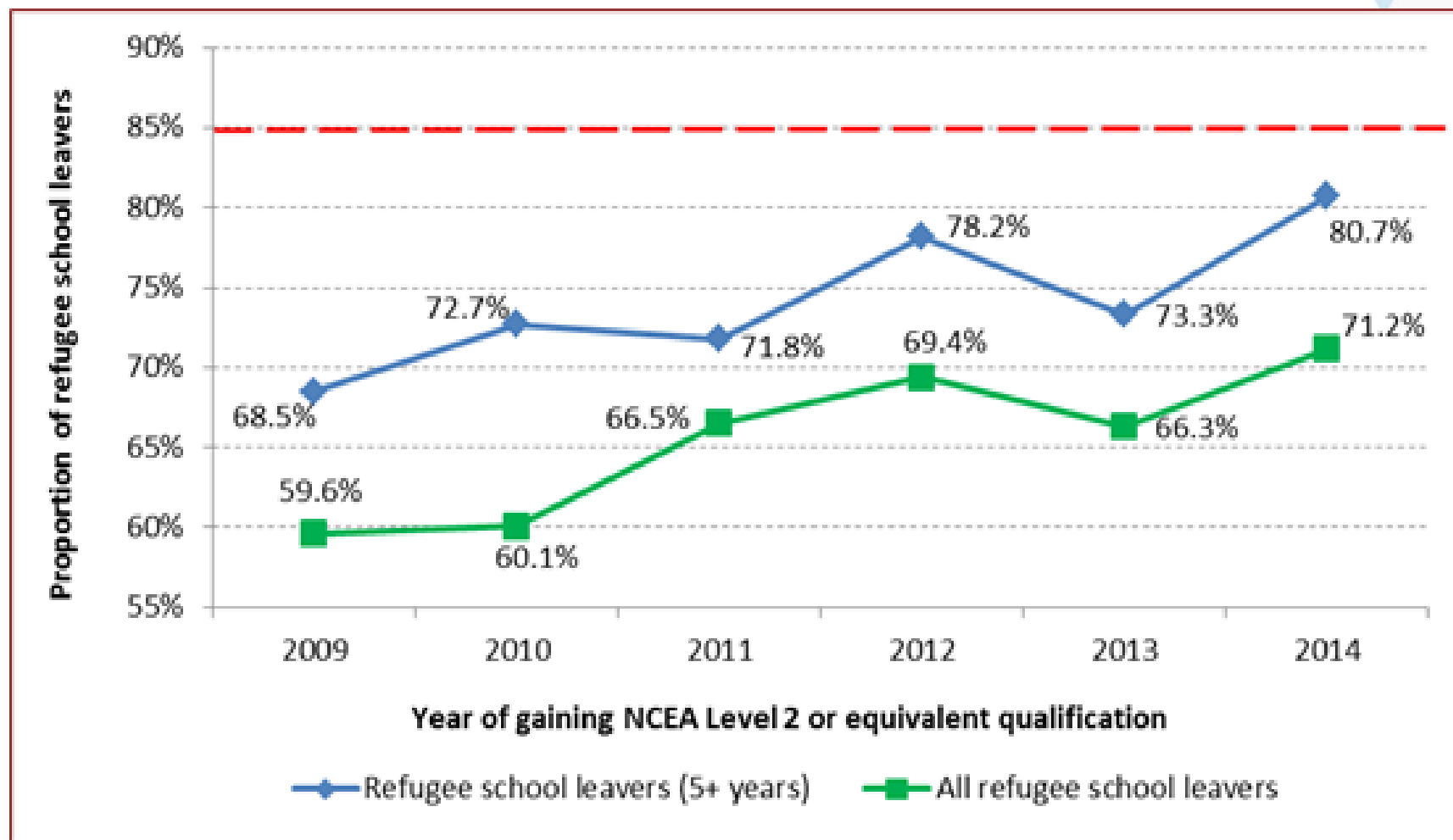
Monitoring and evaluation

Information is available about how refugee background students are progressing from:

- the ESOL database
- NCEA results
- Schools (milestone reports on funded programmes)
- Ongoing community and sector feedback
- Research findings



How are they doing?





Research on refugee education

- Longitudinal evaluation of the achievement of students from refugee backgrounds (Cognition)

1. What are the achievement patterns/trends of students of refugee background in New Zealand secondary schools?

2. What factors help explain the achievement patterns found?

3. What gaps, if any, are there in the provisions and what changes are needed to enhance their achievement?

- Student research on refugee students
- Dr. Hassan Ibrahim's thesis on parental engagement with schools and access to school information



Gaps in research and future interventions

- Evaluating whether the current provision model is meeting the education needs of older refugee background students who arrive with minimal English.
 - Exploring appropriate employment/ training pathways for those students.
 - Inclusion/multicultural policies at school level (beyond the surface). e.g. adequately preparing schools for the growing diversity in our society
 - Evaluating the effectiveness and value of bilingual support in schools
 - Family literacy and first language maintenance
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Gracias

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Shukrān

Thank you

Nuhun

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سو پاس

Mahadsanídíin

Yín aca leec

Salamat



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