Barriers and exclusions: The support needs of newly arrived refugees with a disability

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BARRIERS AND EXCLUSIONS:
The support needs of newly arrived refugees with a disability
Global picture: refugees with a disability

- Due to war, violence, and lack of adequate healthcare, refugees are more likely to have a disability.
- Until recently, refugees with disabilities have not received significant research and advocacy focus.
International law

- Refugees with a disability have rights under CRPD, Refugee Convention and other human rights treaties
- Resettlement is not an obligation under the Refugee Convention, but rather a voluntary commitment from States
- However, discrimination in resettlement programs because of a refugees’ disability is violation of CRPD
Until 2012, Australia’s resettlement program discriminated against refugees with a disability.

- Public Interest Criteria 4007 excluded people who would pose a ‘significant cost’ in the areas of health and community services.
- Policy introduced in 2012 provided a waiver of PIC 4007 for refugees (but not for other migrants).
2012 Changes \(\rightarrow\) more refugees arriving with a disability

Need for Assistance, 2016 (ABS)

- Skilled
- Family
- Humanitarian
- General Community
Barriers: on arrival support

- Lack of information from DHA to settlement organisations about needs prior to arrival
- Delays in medical assessments
- Delays in specialist support and equipment
- Lack of accessible housing
Barriers: Accessing the NDIS

- Lack of support to navigate and apply for NDIS
- Lack of support to obtain specialist assessments
- Lack of knowledge about NDIS and available services, rights and entitlements
- Concept of ‘choice’ in a neoliberal service setting
- Very little interpreter support
People seeking asylum and refugees on TPV/SHEV

- No access the NDIS
- No access to state based disability services
- No access to the Disability Support Pension
Lack of available statistics

• “If we aren’t counted, do we count?”
Recommendations

Ensure accurate information transfers between services

- Avoid settling people living with a disability in rural areas where needed services are not available
- Give refugees priority access to support
- Provide funding for immediate access to disability support aids
- Ensure specialised disability support officers in settlement services
- Provide appropriate housing for people arriving with a disability

Develop mechanisms to ensure full implementation of the NDIA CALD Strategy

- Provide access to NDIS for refugees and people seeking asylum on temporary visas
- Provide support to use the NDIS effectively
- Provide information on the NDIS
- Provide full access to interpreting services
- Carers to be supported and included
- Collect and use data to help plan better responses
- Ensure the NDIS collects data on people from refugee backgrounds