

Global Compact on Refugees

Thematic Discussion 3 Panel 4: How can we bring innovation to humanitarian assistance to achieve greater efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability?

As Delivered by Evan Lewis, Group Manager, Multicultural, Settlement Services & Communities, Department of Social Services

Thank you to the panel for this discussion, in particular the data and evidence presentation, which we would be pleased to support in kind.

I work in the domestic department in Australia responsible for helping refugees and humanitarian agencies in Australia and I wanted to share with you some of the innovative things we have worked on in recent times in the spirit of sharing our journey with other member nations.

As one of the most multicultural nations in the world, and as a settlement nation with a long history of encouraging orderly migration to Australia – today – half of our population of some 24 million were born overseas or their parents were.

As such, we have for a long time spent a lot of time and money on trying to do this as best we can to enable as best settlement and integration as possible.

Over the last 18 months, we have totally redesigned our approach in partnership with refugees and our NGO partners through a co-design workshop approach.

Our new humanitarian settlement program, 'HSP', now delivers a case plan for settlement and integration for every single refugee, which is aimed at recognising their skills and capacity and getting them the best language skills; employment; social connections, and recognition and support for better education outcomes. This starts overseas at the first conversation potential refugees have with Australian officials about their journey to Australia.

Each case plan is individual and is measured against a competency model that measures self-reliance and independence, and then provides referral and support to specialised support as needed. Previously, we used to do a plan for each family unit – which given the size, age and education variation, we think is not the best approach.

This new approach is a game changer and is supported by new data collection and analysis which will tell us what is most important and what works best which we can share with you in future discussions. Of course, our approach is not going to be right for every country's circumstance or capacity but the triage logic and analysis of most cost effective and efficient approaches might be of some assistance to others.

As this new model rolls out we would be happy to share our model; our learnings; and our research and data, and we strongly support the innovative use of learnings and data to innovate and target the resources we have to work with.

I want to thank the panel again for convening this discussion and providing the opportunity for us to share with each other.