
Discussion Paper

Effective Community Capacity Building in the Settlement Context



Community capacity building is an integral part of migration and refugee settlement in Australia. Community capacity building (CCB) is an approach towards developing communities so that they can solve collective problems, act as agents for positive change, and improve the social infrastructure to activate enhanced skills – in short, communities having better capacity to achieve their aspirations.

This discussion paper is intended to explore the latest thinking and issues in settlement CCB. The report is being published at an important juncture at the start of the new Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) program in mid-2024, with much settlement CCB occurring within the SETS program.

The discussion paper draws on research, discussions within the SETS Community of Practice (CoP), and consultations with 10 SETS providers conducting CCB in the 2019–2024 SETS program. It also draws on discussions directly with community themselves.

The discussion paper was designed to provoke thinking and conversations in the settlement sector about what CCB could look like moving forward. By continually adapting and building on the important work of CCB in settlement thus far, communities and the settlement sector can continue to expand their effective efforts in building community capacity, thereby enhancing settlement outcomes for all.

Executive Summary – Effective Community Capacity Building (CCB) in the Settlement Context

Community capacity building (CCB) is a key pillar of successful refugee and migrant settlement in Australia. Settlement CCB is vibrant – with impactful activities occurring across the country, much of which occurs under the national Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) program. Yet there is a gap in a shared understanding of what CCB aims to do and how it is conceived. There is also a lack of a shared and agreed upon guiding model and framework for settlement CCB.

The *Effective CCB in Settlement Discussion Paper* puts forward a social capital approach, model, and initial corresponding framework, to help spur a shared conversation between settlement stakeholders – settlement providers, government, and communities themselves.

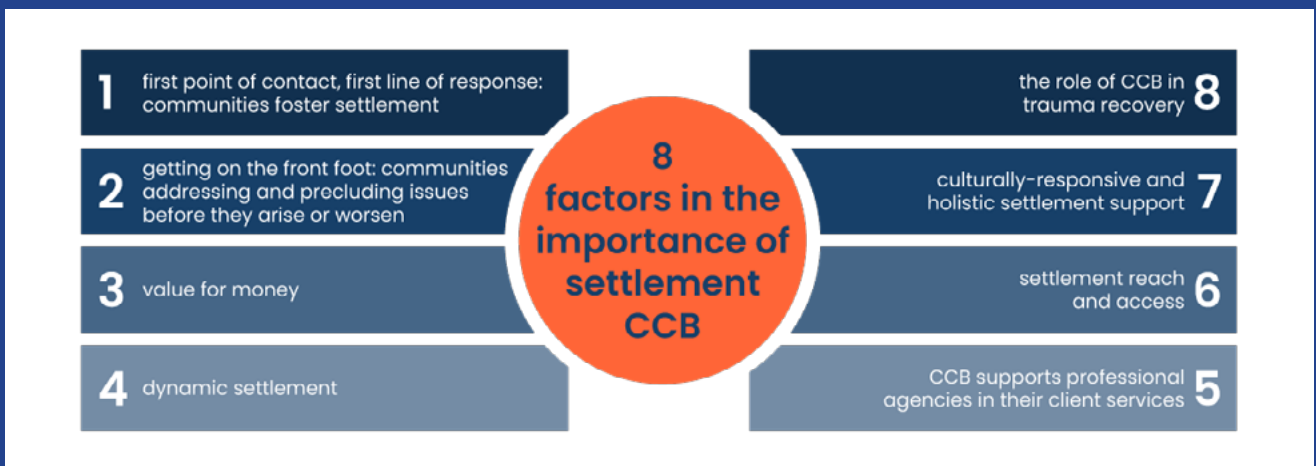
The Discussion Paper aims to be a launching point for settlement stakeholders to come together on settlement CCB, with a shared vocabulary and unifying understanding of CCB in settlement in 2024 (when the SETS program renews), and beyond.

The Discussion Paper builds upon previous work in community capacity building and settlement, including on the social capital approach specifically. The discussion paper is also informed by consultations with settlement CCB providers.

Part 1 – Defining CCB in Settlement and 8 factors on why it is important

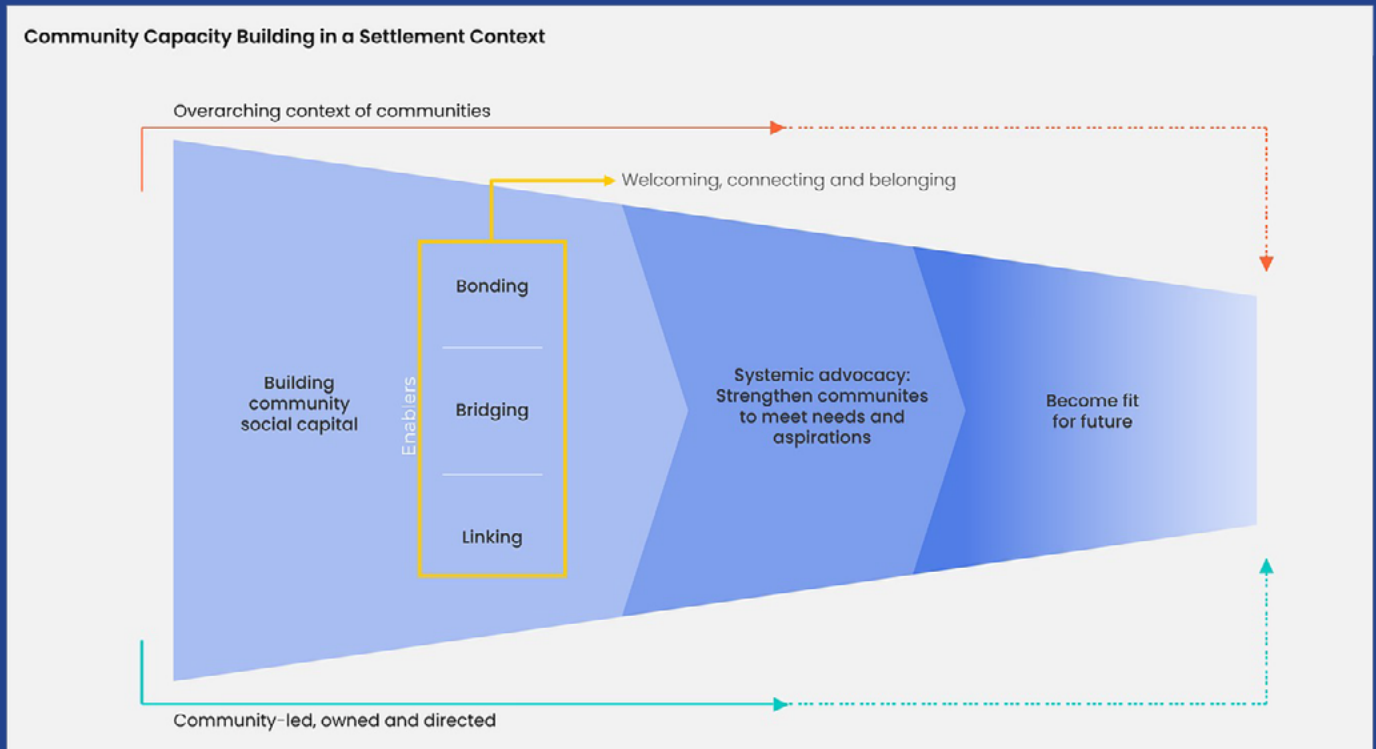
CCB is defined as the building of a community's capacity to be able to solve collective problems. This involves community members developing competencies and skills to themselves act as agents for positive change, alongside the social infrastructure to activate these enhanced capacities.

Eight factors in the importance of Settlement CCB are discussed.



These factors are highlighted to demonstrate the benefits of continued investment and attention to settlement CCB. They are also spotlighted to serve as examples of what settlement stakeholders can aim for with CCB.

Part 2 – A guiding framework for CCB in settlement



The heart of the Discussion Paper is the elucidation of a shared approach, model and framework for Settlement CCB.

The model is based on social capital: Bonding (within community), bridging (between communities), and linking (communities to people in positions of power). These are core areas to develop in order for communities to overcome disadvantage, to enable connection and belonging, and ultimately, to pursue shared aspirations.

The model has two overarching principles. The first is that CCB action must respond to the dynamic, evolving context of individual communities and their constituent parts. The second is that CCB must be led, owned, and directed by communities themselves.

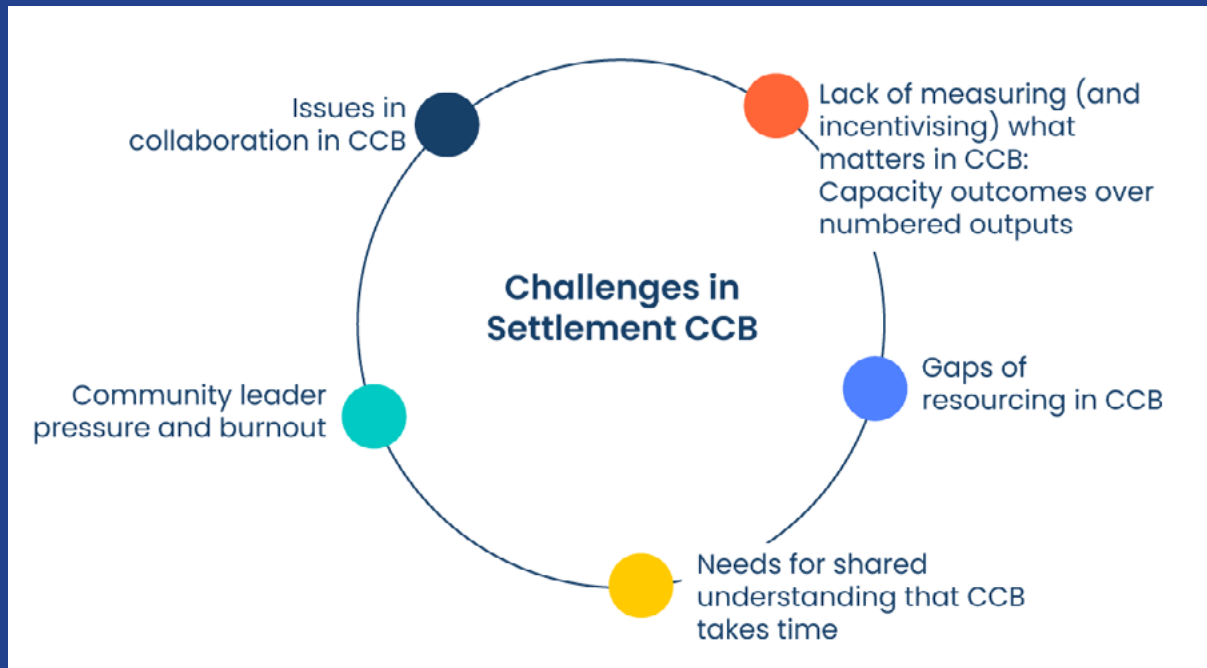
A final aspect of the model is partnering with communities to ready for the future, including to meet unfolding and upcoming trends such as climate change, artificial intelligence, and transitions in future jobs.

The proposals here are designed to serve as a foundation for collective discussions within the sector. A shared understanding of what CCB is, what it aims to do, and how it is framed, will help the sector synchronise and systematise CCB efforts.

Part 3 – Overcoming common barriers and challenges

The final part of the Discussion Paper identifies recurring challenges in CCB in settlement and proposes methods in how they can be overcome.

With Settlement CCB continuing and potentially expanding in the years ahead, this collation of five common issues intends to serve as a “watch out” message. It can also act as a touchstone for next steps and future actions.



CCB in Settlement Moving Forward

Communities with enhanced capacities have major positive impacts on settlement outcomes.

The Discussion Paper asks three questions for the settlement sector to collectively coalesce around, including asking what adaptations are needed to strengthen the proposed Settlement CCB Guiding Framework; how the framework can be made most beneficial to communities and settlement organisations (including what accompanying resources are needed); and what additional barriers and challenges need to be overcome and methods to do so.

The paper also outlines a series of next steps: The co-design of the expanded Settlement CCB Framework; development of outcomes measurements; refining the CCB National Workforce Competencies for Settlement Practitioners; developing associated CCB practice resources; and further work to showcase existing settlement CCB in Australia.

The Discussion Paper acts as a launching point for conversations to progress CCB in settlement.

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The Social Policy Group and authors also extend thanks to the Australian Government (Department of Home Affairs) for their contributions to the Discussion Paper, support to the Social Policy Group as a migration and refugee settlement peak body, and also to the wider settlement sector including Community Capacity Building (CCB) programs.

Finally, sincere thanks to refugee-led organisations, community leaders and representatives, and community members themselves who have shaped this Discussion Paper through formal and informal conversations and inherent expertise.

About

The Social Policy Group (SPG) is a national, non-government, not-for-profit body with specialist expertise in social policy and program design with a focus on population diversity, social and community cohesion, gender equality, community participation and inclusion, systems' responsiveness, and community outreach and engagement.

The SPG facilitates the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support Community of Practice (SETSCoP), which brings together service providers who support refugees and vulnerable migrants to enable sharing and learning, and improve outcomes for people supported through the Australian SETS program and the wider community.

The Social Policy Group developed this Discussion Paper as part of its role as a peak body for migrant and refugee settlement, in order to support the settlement sector and bring together stakeholders around a potential shared understanding of Community Capacity Building (CCB) in Australian settlement.

The Discussion Paper

Community capacity is a vital element in successful settlement: When migrant and refugee communities are strong, cohesive, connected, and inclusive, then new arrivals are better supported, settlement organisations provide improved services, and settlement outcomes are enhanced.

Conversely, when communities are fragmented and lack institutional strength, the opposite occurs – settlement services struggle to connect with communities and communities themselves cannot rise to meaningfully address their own settlement priorities and concerns.

In short, when CCB is done well, refugees and other migrants settle better. These are the major impetuses for Community Capacity Building (CCB) in Settlement.

But what are the most effective strategies for community capacity building (CCB) in a settlement context? And what does – or should – this look like in practice?

The Social Policy Group developed this Discussion Paper to tackle these core questions with Australian migrant and refugee settlement sector stakeholders. The major aim of the Discussion Paper is to pose a shared **Framework for CCB in Settlement**, based on *social capital*. This is to help shape a unifying, overarching understanding of CCB in settlement moving forward for the Australian migrant and refugee settlement sector.

The Discussion Paper is structured into three parts, each addressing crucial (and interlinked) questions in Settlement CCB.

- 1. How do we define CCB in settlement and why is it important?** – The first section of the discussion paper sets the parameters of CCB, and explores the important role CCB plays in settlement.
- 2. What should CCB be working to achieve and what does effective CCB look like in practice?** – The Discussion Paper proposes a harmonised approach, model and framework for CCB in Settlement, using social capital as a basis (bonding within community, bridging between communities, and linking community with decision-makers).
- 3. What are the barriers and challenges in CCB? And how can these best be overcome?** – The third and final section identifies common challenges in settlement CCB and puts forward ways these issues can be overcome.

The questions and initial answers are designed to inform policy and practice. But they are also posed to spur further discussion in the settlement space. How do we collectively envision community capacity building? And what are effective strategies and methods towards strengthened and inclusive communities?

In this shared conversation, policymakers, settlement stakeholders, CCB practitioners, refugee-led organisations, and community leaders and representatives should hopefully gain some valuable insights drawn from across the settlement sector. These insights and conversations will, in turn, help develop evidence-based strategies to strengthen migrant and refugee communities and support corresponding settlement.

The context of CCB in Settlement in Australia

The major funded settlement CCB initiative is part of the Australian Settlement, Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) Program – funded by the Australian government (Department of Home Affairs).

The SETS program is being renewed from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2027. While the 2019 – 2024 SETS program was comprised of two components, Client Services and Community Capacity Building, the 2024 – 2027 program brings together both components in recognition of the important links between the two (links which are also outlined in this Discussion Paper).

From 2019 through to June 30, 2024, 20 organisations were funded through SETS to conduct CCB. 16 of the 20 organisations also implement SETS Client Services (along with 77 other lead settlement providers in the SETS Client Services stream). The other four organisations conduct SETS CCB without implementing a Client Services settlement component.

The 2019–2024 SETS program commenced on 1 January 2019, following on from the previously titled “Settlement Grants Program” (SGP). Under the previous SGP program, there were two streams related to community capacity building: The “Community Coordination and Development” service stream and the “Support for ethno-specific services/communities” service stream. The 2017 Evaluation of Settlement Grants (UNSW) recommended the two streams be combined,¹ which was then enacted.

Under the SETS Program, the Community Capacity Building component “helps new and emerging

community groups and organisations support their specific communities towards collectively increasing the social participation, economic and personal well-being of community members, to ensure that positive settlement outcomes are sustained in the long term.”

It should be stressed that Settlement CCB is not just group work with migrants and refugees – which often occurs under the SETS Client Services component. Indeed, part of this Discussion Paper is to make this distinction clearer, and re-emphasise the purpose, meaning, and unique methods of CCB.

It should also be emphasised that while SETS CCB is a prominent program in settlement CCB, it is not all encompassing. There are a number of initiatives to build and develop community across Australia, with funding from different levels of government as well as private philanthropy and grants.

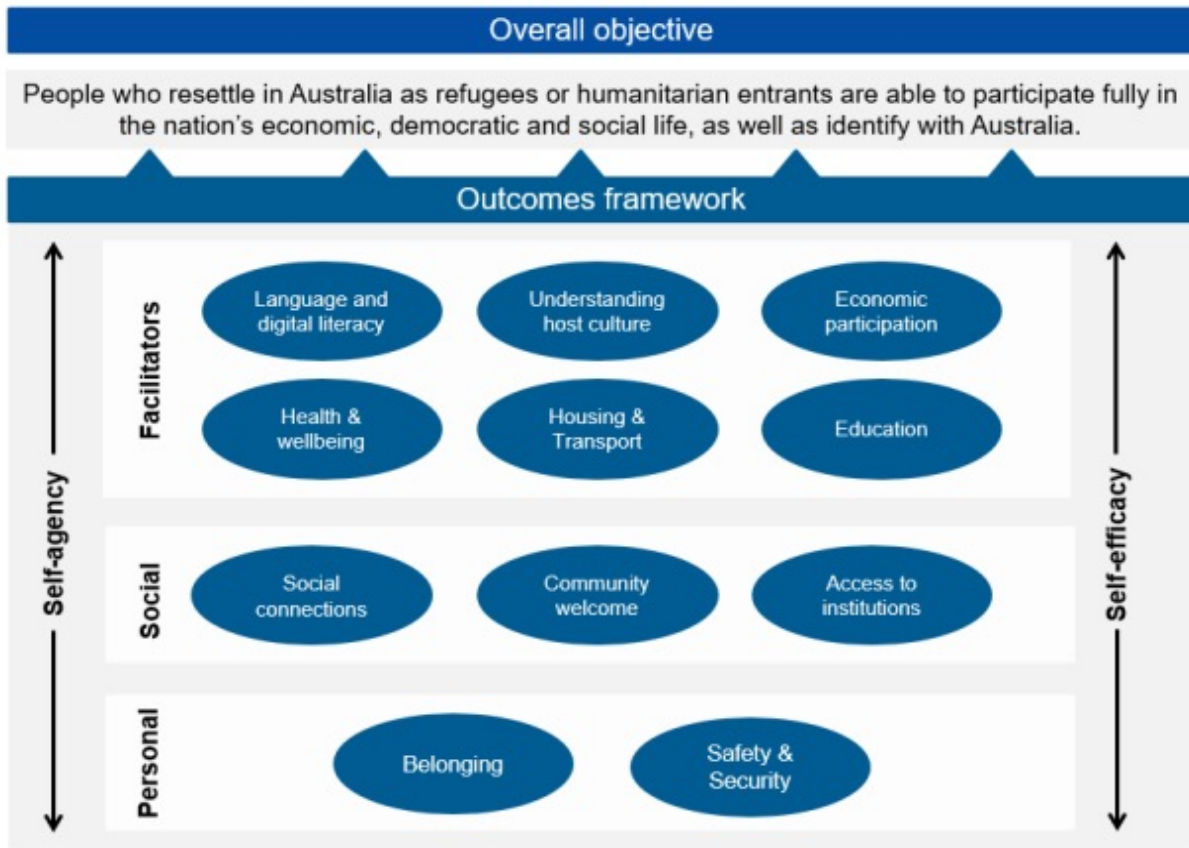
While Settlement CCB works with both refugee communities and migrant communities, practitioners have noted that it is crucial to distinguish that these communities do not always hold the same experiences. Refugee communities specifically experience the deliberate destruction of social capital by conflict, state-sanctioned violence, and the actions of oppressive regimes.² Complicating matters further is that migrant communities themselves will have heterogeneous and diverse experiences.³ When the terms migrant and refugee communities are used in this Discussion Paper, it is not to signify they are interchangeable. Rather, each community, and even groups within those ‘communities’, must be understood with reference to their unique histories and own dynamic, changing contexts.⁴

1. Ciara Smyth, Sandra Gendera, Gianfranco Giuntoli, Trish Hill, Ilan Katz, Doris Asante. 2017. Evaluation of Settlement Grants – Final Report. University of New South Wales, Social Policy Research Centre. August 2017.

2. Consultation with STARTTS 2023 and 2024; also: Mitchell J, Correa-Velez I (2010), “Community Development with Survivors of Torture and Trauma: an evaluation framework”, in *Community Development Journal*, Vol. 45 Issue 1: 90-110.

3. For a critical appraisal of the issues in distinguishing between ‘migrants’ and ‘refugees’ too rigidly, see: Jørgen Carling, 2023. The phrase ‘refugees and migrants’ undermines analysis, policy and protection. *International Migration*, Volume 61, Issue 3, June 2023, pp. 399-403.

4. See the ‘Overarching Context of Communities’ section in Part 2 of this Discussion Paper.



Community Capacity Building and the Refugee and Humanitarian Settlement and Integration Outcomes Framework

In October 2023, the Department of Home Affairs released an updated settlement and integration outcomes framework.

There are two underpinning principles of this framework: the need to promote self-agency and self-efficacy.

The Department defines these principles in the following ways:

- *Self-agency involves the ability to exercise control, influence and responsibility over one's environment. In the settlement context, it is about a client's ability to influence and take appropriate responsibility for their settlement*

journey and outcomes including the services allocated to support their needs, goals and aspirations. It is balanced by the provision of tailored and appropriate support for client's needs, including those requiring higher levels of support.

- *Self-efficacy involves a person's belief in their capacity to act in the ways necessary to reach specific goals ('perceived ability'). Self-efficacy differs from self-agency in being the belief in one's ability to act with agency, self-agency is actually being able to act so.*

The Discussion Paper proposes that both of these principles are directly applicable in a community context in addition to individuals. Empowered communities have a profound need to have self-agency (as detailed in this Discussion Paper, this means that activities are 'community led, owned, and directed').

Self-efficacy can also be built and nurtured at the community level – indeed, this is the very essence of the goal of community capacity building – that communities have a belief and confidence in their capacity to achieve their mutual goals.

The Discussion Paper recognises that the factors outlined in the *Refugee and Humanitarian Settlement and Integration Outcomes Framework* can relate directly to community capacity building and are mapped based on the social capital processes of bonding, bridging and linking.



Part 1. Defining CCB in Settlement and factors in its' importance

Building community capacity to solve collective problems and achieve shared aspirations

Community capacity-building (CCB) is an approach to increase a community's capacity to solve collective problems⁵ and achieve shared aspirations. This involves community members developing competencies and skills to themselves act as agents for positive change, alongside the social infrastructure to activate these enhanced capacities.

CCB is interlinked with the concepts of community development and community strengthening: Processes where community members take collective action on issues they find important, empowering community members and forging stronger and increasingly connected communities.⁶

Defining settlement in CCB benefits from three key critiques.

Firstly, the concept of 'communities' should not be treated as static, homogenous units. Communities can share geographic areas or be based on shared characteristics, yet not all people from the same country or who speak the same language should be automatically considered part of the same 'community'. Communities are almost always heterogenous – with different subsets, divergent groups, and important intersectional aspects including gender, ethnicity, and class. A 'community' then is not a monolith, but much more dynamic.

Secondly, community capacity building is not a binary between communities that 'have' capacity and those that lack it. Instead, all communities, including broader Australian society, stand on a spectrum of capacity.

5. Shaun Lohar, Rhys Price-Robertson & Lalitha Nair, 2013. Applying community capacity- building approaches to child welfare practice and policy. Child Family Community Australia (CFCA) Paper No. 13, 2013. Australian Institute of Family Studies.

6. Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2023. What is community development? Resource Sheet: July 2023.

Thirdly is the topic of who builds community capacity and who owns the CCB process. The Discussion Paper embraces the reflexive turn in broader CCB. Settlement CCB is not about so-called 'experts' building the technical capacity of 'recipient communities'. Nor does it presuppose a deficit lens, where communities need outside expertise. Instead, it posits that CCB is a process (or series of processes) where community members take collective action on issues that they find important, empowering community members and forging stronger and increasingly connected communities. In this conception, settlement providers and CCB practitioners play a supportive role of refugee-led organisations and the community themselves.

This Discussion Paper, alongside other settlement sector initiatives, proposes that social capital – the networks and relationships among people, including community bonds, bridges, and links – should be considered an inherent part of the definition of community capacity building (Section 2, below).

A well-capacitated community is one that has enhanced social capital, with stronger bonds between community members, better connections to those outside of the community, and greater links with people in positions of power. A well-capacitated community is also one where the community and those who comprise the community (including community groups, refugee-led organisations, community leaders, representatives, and members) have self-agency and self-efficacy, linking back to the core settlement principles outlined in the Australian Government's Settlement and Integration Framework (above). Communities with capacity, along with individuals, have belief in their ability to create change, and the actual ability to create change. A community with built capacity hold freedoms which mean that members of that community can actively participate in decision-making and processes that affect the community and their lives, and exercise meaningful choices and actions.⁷

Key factors in the importance of settlement CCB

CCB is vital to settlement outcomes. The rest of Part 1 of this Discussion Paper outlines key factors in what makes CCB so important. It draws from literature as well as consultation with settlement CCB practitioners.

Through identifying and outlining these eight features, the anticipation is that organisations conducting settlement CCB can integrate elements into their CCB planning and implementation.

The eight factors also highlight the importance of CCB in settlement for ongoing and future investments and resourcing.

8 factors in the importance of settlement CCB

- 1 first point of contact, first line of response: communities foster settlement
- 2 getting on the front foot: communities addressing and precluding issues before they arise or worsen
- 3 value for money
- 4 dynamic settlement
- 5 CCB supports professional agencies in their client services
- 6 settlement reach and access
- 7 culturally-responsive and holistic settlement support
- 8 the role of CCB in trauma recovery

7. Amartya Sen, 1999. *Development as freedom*. New York: Alfred Knopf; Jim Ife, 2009. *Human Rights From Below. Achieving Rights Through Community Development*, Cambridge University Press 9780521711081.

Factor 1: First point of contact, first line of response: Communities foster settlement and are an important touchpoint

Settlement practitioners across Australia heavily emphasised: Strengthened and inclusive communities foster settlement and are crucial to settlement outcomes.

Communities are usually the **first point of contact – and first line of settlement response** – for newly arrived refugees and other migrants.

It is communities that act as a triage, a prevention service, and an early intervention program, all in one.

A refugee or migrant who has recently arrived in Australia will very often reach out to members of their same community group for support. This includes approaching community leaders with settlement issues: From common everyday questions through to family issues. It also often includes religious institutions, providing social connections and also networks of information. Newly-arrived migrants also often seek out community groups and organisations – ethno- or religious-specific organisations which are identified as trustworthy, accessible, and helpful.

One example of this initial settlement response identified by practitioners was that particular communities that were strong and cohesive would often quickly link new arrivals to employment. Community members, leaders, and associations would use networks to search out opportunities and connect new migrants to those roles. They would also support newcomers pursue any requisite qualifications or credentials, if needed, and offer guidance on workplace culture and conduct.

Communities support newly-arrived migrants in other areas too. Community leaders, representatives and members will help people navigate Australian systems, including housing, transport, and service access. And communities provide cultural and

“Refugee communities and refugee-led organisations have an incredibly important role to play in settlement. Having refugee organisations successfully engaged and supporting individual community members connects with the integration outcomes framework that the Department [of Home Affairs] has developed. Having those organisations capable of participating, through capacity building, facilitates settlement.”

– STARTTS, NSW

“It is so important to have community leaders educated in a range of areas. Newly arrived migrants and refugees rely on people who have settled here previously.”

– Arabic Welfare, VIC

social supports, reducing isolation and boosting new arrivals understanding of life in Australia.

Well-capacitated communities play a preventative role in this regard – successfully intervening to support people settling in Australia and thereby reinforcing the role of other settlement services. Communities help mitigate against crises and social isolation. (Settlement client services in turn reduce the short-term and long-term burden on costlier mainstream services, such as emergency hospital presentations, homelessness, justice encounters, and community services). In this sense, it is communities that act as a triage, a prevention service, and an early intervention program, all in one.⁸

8. While highlighting the multiple factors in the importance of settlement CCB, it should also be noted that communities should not be expected to do for free what settlement services and mainstream services are paid to do. See ‘Resourcing CCB’ and ‘Community Leader Burnout’ in Part 3: Challenges and Barriers, of this Discussion Paper.

Factor 2: Getting on the front foot: Communities addressing and precluding issues before they arise or worsen

The role that communities play in settlement means that instead of settlement service providers constantly putting out fires, the settlement sector can work with communities to address issues before they deteriorate.

Settlement practitioners pointed out that CCB was particularly potent in addressing long-term issues that communities face, proactively getting ahead of recurrent issues rather than over-reliance on client services having to react to those issues.

“CCB encapsulated everything that is essential to successful settlement, particularly as communities move through their settlement journey. It’s building capacity for communities to be self-sufficient and independent.”

– Multicultural Council of Wagga Wagga, NSW

“CCB plays rights at the heart of what settlement should be doing: Building capacities of communities to do things for themselves.”

– Wyndham Community and Education Centre,

VIC

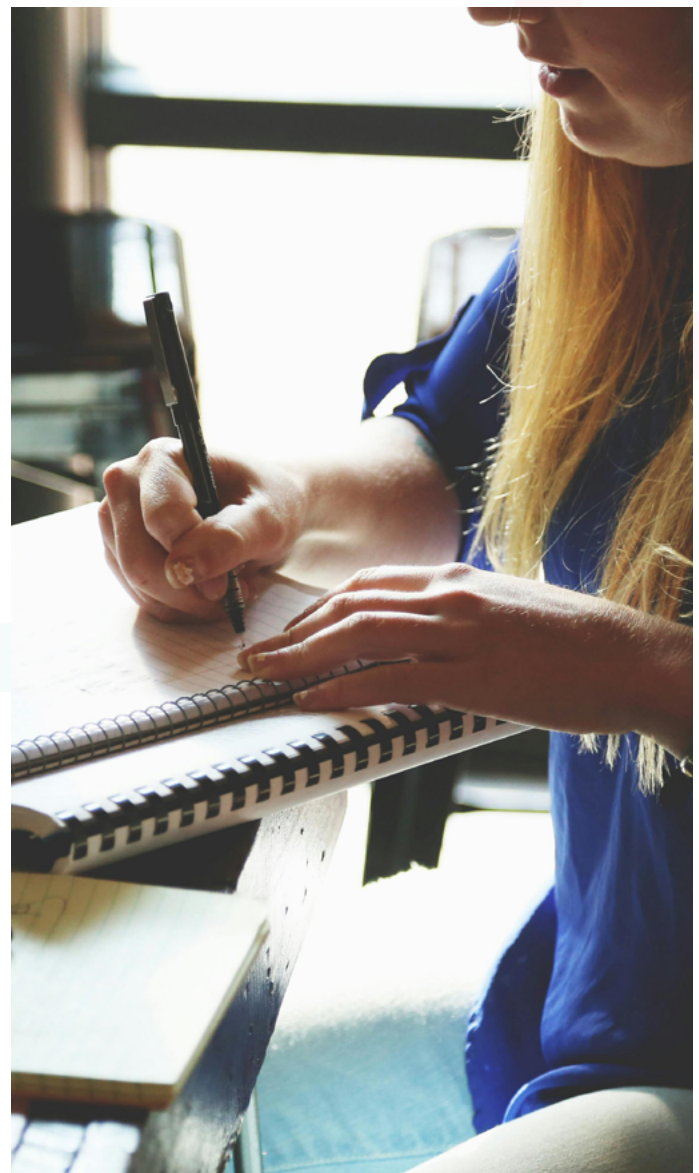
Factor 3: Investing in CCB leads to high-quality settlement outcomes

While not the main impetus for their work, settlement practitioners did note that they assessed CCB to represent value for money over time, making investment in CCB well worth it. While care must be taken to not shift burden onto communities without the requisite funding and support for settlement outcomes, CCB represents the opportunity to undergird and amplify the important work of communities, grassroots groups and ethno- and religious-specific organisations, including the work of volunteers and role of charitable donations. Hence, CCB inputs (mentoring, networks, links, and information) results in higher returns, with many community members, leaders, and associations implementing high-quality settlement work.

Factor 4: Dynamic settlement

Community capacity building and resulting activities are dynamic, responding to actual needs within communities. Settlement practitioners cited the COVID-19 pandemic as a major example: The situation was constantly changing, and CCB work was responsive to this, since communities, CCB providers, and other stakeholders such as government could work together to quickly identify needs and respond to them (such as vaccine hesitancy).

CCB is usually driven by community factors quite directly in this way – instead of waiting for research or reports, the consistent dialogue with community groups more immediately reveals the most pressing and changing issue areas, as well as the settlement work that needs to occur to address them.



Factor 5: CCB supports professional agencies in their client services

The Community Capacity Building and Client Services components of settlement are closely intertwined.

At both their best, Clients Services actively informs the design and implementation of CCB, and vice versa. The SETS Client Services component often finds emergent trends – issues that cut across communities and which are becoming increasingly important. This knowledge and understanding can then inform CCB: Settlement providers can work directly with community on the issues that they are seeing most.

“Community capacity building is a point of contact between communities, caseworkers, and other stakeholders – we overlap, and we work together.”

– Welcome Hub, WA

Factor 6: Settlement reach and access

Part of the synergy with client services is that communities – with appropriate capacity – can reach migrants and refugees that prove more difficult to access. This includes vulnerable, isolated and hard-to-reach community members. Communities often hold levels of recognition and trust for community members – a newly-arrived migrant who sees a representative community organisation will often feel a level of comfort to approach that organisation with questions and issues.⁹

Communities also benefit from being approachable – linguistically, culturally, and with appropriate levels of formality or informality.

Furthermore, communities can be more proactive in reaching migrants and refugees: Through networks and community knowledge, community leaders, religious leaders, and community association workers can understand which people may need support and why, in a way that may be more difficult for settlement service providers.

“There are people with certain needs who can frequent a service like ours more readily, but there are many migrants and refugees who do not. CCB is a way to reach these people, the more marginalised people, within marginalised groups.”

– North Coast Settlement Service, NSW

Migrants and refugees in a new country with different life experiences can find it difficult to connect to generalised service providers. CCB was understood to support community members to reach levels of trust and understanding, where there can be better linkages with other settlement providers and services.

“It’s natural that migrants and refugee will step into small grassroots organisations [such as the ones we work with and support]. This build confidence and provides links to settlement providers. This means that better economic and social outcomes can be achieved.”

– South East Community Links, VIC

Torture and trauma specialists note that individuals who are resettling feel different impacts of trauma, and therefore different senses of safety, including how comfortable they are in accessing both settlement services and mainstream services. Many migrants and refugees may struggle to access services without community leader and community organisation support, information, and referrals – another major reason why CCB is an important first-step in settlement.

9. A caveat for community connections is that refugees may mistrust or be suspicious of authorities, those in positions of power, and community groups related to the deliberate destruction of social capital in contexts of state and/or communal violence.

“Because of culture, language, and all the other barriers in access, CCB is a really effective way to communicate. If groups are empowered with information, resources, training, and networks, then some of those barriers that impede people from different cultural groups from accessing, for example, health and mental health resources – those barriers are broken down. Information and resources go straight to actual people to disseminate. For instance, local government provide information in their area. If they throw it out there, it may fall onto certain groups. But then a whole lot of groups and people may never receive that information. Community is an effective way to effectively disseminate the information that people need.”

– Multicultural Futures, WA

Impact of strengthened community organisations

Community capacity building within settlement has resulted in a diversity of organisations that have evolved from new associations or groups to prominent settlement organisations. This includes organisations that have been independently implementing SETS programs, including refugee-led and community organisations now conducting the SETS CCB component themselves. Beyond organisations which have since gone onto implement SETS, there are a diverse array of community groups that have benefitted from CCB activities and, in turn, play an important role in settlement. These organisations mobilise private grants and public funding from across the three levels of government to support the settlement of migrant and refugees in Australia.

CCB involves multifaceted work, including institutional strengthening, leadership development, and expert inputs to support transformations from “start-ups” to fully-fledged settlement organisations themselves supporting migrants and refugees newly arrived in Australia.

“Without the help of [CCB], we would not have succeeded, to the way we are here today. For that, the organisation and partners are forever grateful. So now we are pushing with our own community capacity building, pushing to help people stand up on their own two feet.”

– Assyrian Australian Association, NSW

Settlement specialists cited strengthened community organisations as one of the major impacts of CCB in settlement. CCB and strengthened community organisations results in a diverse and flourishing settlement sector that benefits from the wider range of settlement actors: From large-scale providers to community houses, to grassroots, ethno-specific, religious-specific, and community-oriented groups, associations and organisations.

CCB and strengthened community organisations results in a diverse and flourishing settlement sector.

Factor 7: Culturally-responsive and holistic settlement support

Communities provide culturally-informed, appropriate and responsive support to migrants and refugees. Communities know their own needs, with an inherent understanding of issues that community members are facing. And thus, responses that come from the community are tailored to both people settling in Australia and the issues they are facing.

Community also proves to be a useful pathway for holistic settlement support.

“Grassroots organisations provide services which might not necessarily be best done by formal settlement providers alone. This includes cultural activities, language classes, women’s physical activity classes, yoga classes, mindfulness sessions. These sessions might be more costly to deliver through formal settlement services. But when done by grassroots organisations, with CCB support (otherwise the grassroots organisations may lack capacity to successfully deliver and scale these services), these activities actually serve a big purpose. They are important and impactful for overall settlement outcomes.”

– South East Community Links, VIC

Factor 8: The role of CCB in Trauma Recovery

CCB is particularly important in trauma recovery and empowerment. And as torture and trauma specialists from STARTTS (NSW) stated: *“Without recovery, there is no successful settlement”*.¹⁰ The trauma recovery process through CCB starts with the recognition that trauma impacts all levels of the social system – individuals, families, and whole

communities. Trauma and people’s refugee and migration experiences often directly destroys social connections and relationships between people.¹¹ This is sometimes deliberate destruction – as in the case of organised violence in countries of origin. CCB in settlement does the opposite – it works to establish safety and restoring connections between people and the community.

These connections are important because social networks have been identified as reducing the negative effects of life events, ‘including exposure to torture and trauma, by promoting mental health and resilience’.¹² Refugees and migrants rebuild networks themselves, which help them satisfy basic needs, feel supported, and develop a meaningful sense of identity and social life. And research has found that community development programmes help refugees (and in the case of the research, young refugees specifically), reconnect with their communities through participation, resulting in an array of protection and well-being benefits, and thus in turn, assisting recovery from trauma.¹³

“Trauma disempowers and disconnects people. CCB does the opposite – it is empowerment and connections, on the level of community. Disconnection is destruction. Exposure to refugee experiences is very destructive to social capital. CCB is focussed on creating social capital on all different levels. Being able to create that social capital is an element of recovery for community as a whole.”

– STARTTS, NSW

10. Consultation with STARTTS 2023

11. Consultation with STARTTS 2023; also: Mitchell J, Correa-Velez I (2010), “Community Development with Survivors of Torture and Trauma: an evaluation framework”, in *Community Development Journal*, Vol. 45 Issue 1: 90-110.

12. Mahler, 1995; Manderson et al., 1998; Farwell, 2001, in Mitchell J and Correa-Velez I (2010), Community Development with Survivors of Torture and Trauma: an evaluation framework, *Community Development Journal*, Vol. 45 Issue 1: 90-110.

13. Mitchell J and Correa-Velez I (2010), Community Development with Survivors of Torture and Trauma: an evaluation framework, *Community Development Journal*, Vol. 45 Issue 1: 90-110.

Part 2. A guiding model and framework for CCB in Settlement

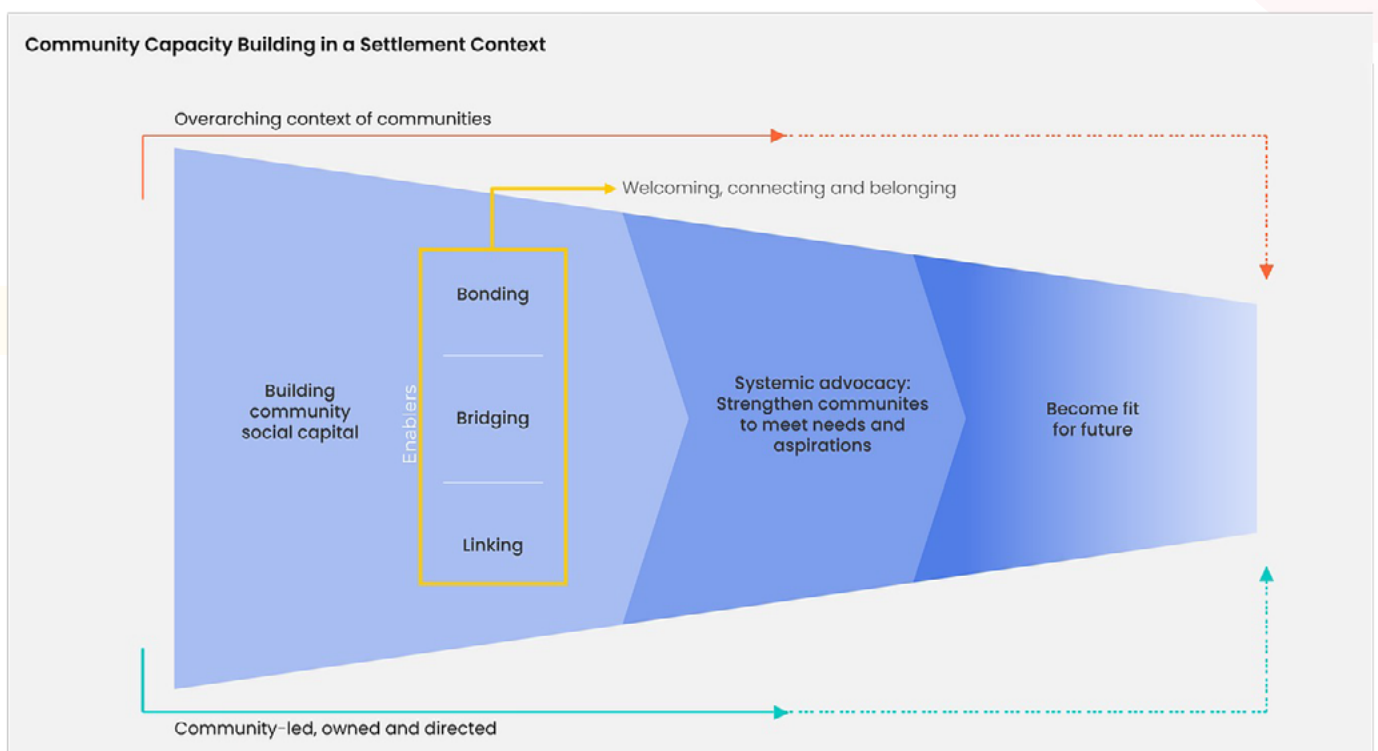
One of the issues with CCB in settlement is there is a lack of an overarching and coherent framework to guide and support CCB work. While a diversity of approaches can be a strength in settlement, this lack of panoptic structure causes a series of drawbacks:

- It is challenging to understand and assess the impact of CCB
- It is difficult to collaborate when agencies are working towards different goals
- The lack of a shared understanding means that there is no unifying direction and driver for CCB in settlement across the country

Part 2 of the Discussion Paper outlines what settlement stakeholders could be collectively working to achieve, proposing a social capital approach and associated model and framework to help guide future CCB work in settlement.

In discussions with settlement stakeholders, there are three core focus areas for community capacity building in a settlement context, with two initial and overarching principles of adapting to the unique context of communities and ensuring CCB efforts are community-led, owned, and directed.

1. Community development: Building social capital through enhancing bonding, bridging, and linking. This includes attention to social capital enablers (individual, community and socio-political factors essential to social capital), and the idea that social capital supports the welcome, connection, and belonging of migrants and refugees.
2. Systemic advocacy: Strengthening communities to overcome disadvantage, reduce vulnerability, solve collective problems, and pursue community aspirations.
3. Future planning: Capacitating communities to be 'fit for the future'.



Overarching context of communities

The context for each community will configure the community capacity building that takes shape. CCB does not work as a cookie-cutter approach: What applies for one community might not necessarily apply for another community. For example, community group (a) might have existing tight bonds within their community, with well-attended cultural events and cohesion between different families and individuals, while lacking connections to policymakers and financial resources. Conversely, community group (b) might also lack important links to decision-makers and authorities, but also be experiencing community fragmentation and conflict.

Beyond this basic example of distinctions between communities, there are many further contextual and community dynamics which will shape action. This includes time periods of settlement (and multiple times of settlement for the same 'community', for instance, Afghans arriving from the mid 1990s, after 2001, and those arriving after the evacuations in 2021). It also includes gender dynamics of communities, leadership characteristics, the role of faith(s) and religion(s), generational relationships, complex histories of migration and settlement, and how these different dynamics interact.

Meaningful capacity building will not take place – nor be effective – in a social vacuum, without taking into account and being tailored to each evolving context.

Community-led, owned and directed – the foundation of community capacity building.

Settlement providers all expressed that the most important foundation for their community capacity building is that it is community-led, owned and directed.

The starting point for the proposed Settlement CCB Model is based on all initiatives being driven by communities themselves. This is based on the knowledge that communities know best what they want, need, and aspire to. They have their own ideas and understanding on how needs and issues might be addressed. Communities are the best placed to understand and propound their own priorities, given their position, knowledge of issues, and expertise on how they can best be addressed.

“Communities have a lot of strengths and their own solutions. They know how best to support their own communities and understand their own needs.”

– SSI, QLD

This starting point also challenges any potential presuppositions that external actors “hold the answers”, while communities are in deficit and in need of outside expertise. Placing communities at the forefront – and settlement CCB practitioners and interventions in support and partnership roles – positions the subsequent social capital approach and framework to be equitable.

Community-led, owned and directed capacity building is also effective. Involving community in all aspects of community capacity building may require greater investments, but a major benefit of community ownership over processes is that it leads to significantly better overall outcomes.¹⁴

14. Laverack, G. (2001). “An identification and interpretation of the organizational aspects of community empowerment.” *Community Development Journal*, 36(2), 134-145.

Social Capital Approach: Bonding, Bridging, and Linking

The core goals include:

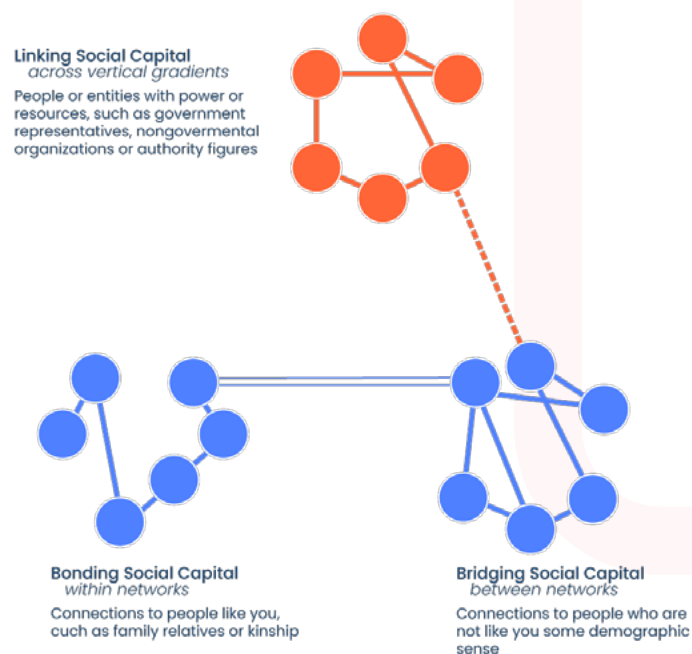
- To develop more cohesive communities. This includes increasing community cohesion between different groupings within a community and to enhance intergenerational relationships within a community.
- To facilitate integration within the wider Australian community. This includes building relationships between new and emerging communities and more established communities from migrant and refugee backgrounds.
- To link communities to the organisation and resources that they need to improve settlement outcomes. This includes increasing awareness of key services available to support members of a community.

In developing the proposed CCB in Settlement model and framework, the Discussion Paper builds upon evidence in community capacity building (including in Australian settlement) and social capital literature.¹⁵ This includes highlighting the 2013 Report 'The Glue that Binds', Social Capital in Refugee Communities Settling in Australia (STARTTS, UNSW, Centre for Refugee Research, 2013). It also draws on insights from consultations with the settlement sector.

The Social Capital approach has gained increasing prominence over the past decades as a way to understand and shape social action, including community capacity building. While there are multiple tenets of thought regarding social capital, the Discussion Paper uses three major and widely used components of social capital: Bonding (within communities), bridging (between communities), and linking (community members with those in positions of power). It should be noted that these three types of social capital are interlinked and not mutually exclusive.

A focus on social capital can benefit a community in the following ways:

1. It can help to build connection and trust within a community.
2. It is an enabler of cultural exchange and integration between communities.
3. It enables a sense of reciprocity within and between communities through mutual support and solidarity.
4. It facilitates access to information, resources and opportunities necessary for community development.



Bonding, bridging and linking social capital Figure from Aldrich 2012

Bonding (within communities)

Bonding social capital comprises the relationships *within* a community or social group. Bonding capital refers to 'bonds' within relatively homogenous social groups, for instance within ethnic, religious, or cultural communities. It involves trust, support, and solidarity among and between members of the group.

¹⁵ Plagens and Stapleton offer an overview of social capital as a historical concept, as well as useful analysis about the value of social capital or relationships between social capital and desirable societal outcomes. Gregory K. Plagens and Kenneth C. Stapleton, 2011. Social Capital Theory and the Metropolitan University: Reframing Ideas about Neighborhood Interactions.

Bridging (between communities)

Bridging capital involves the horizontal connections between communities and between people from different types of social groups. It refers to relationships and networks across different social boundaries. The bridges consist of connections to people in the wider community. Bridges can support individuals and groups to exchange information as well as access both economic and social resources, all of which may not be available within their own communities. Bridging social capital can promote broader social participation and inclusion.

Linking (community members and people in positions of power)

Linking social capital are the vertical connections between members and people in positions of authority or power (for instance, government institutions, policymakers, officials, influential leaders, and organisations or institutions). Linking has a critical role in providing access to external resources (including but not limited to financial resources), support, influence, and opportunities.

Social Capital Enablers

Social capital enablers are individual, community and socio-political factors that are essential for building social capital.¹⁶ Enablers on the one hand support social capital, but then they also catalyse social capital into meaningful change and settlement – extending social connections, networks and links and helping them to flourish.

Enablers are so important that the STARTTS and UNSW research ‘The Glue that Binds’ reported that the goal of ‘strengthening social capital’ would be meaningless without concurrent strengthening of enablers. CCB specialists too noted that Social Capital on its own is essential but also insufficient for community capacity building – and must be paired with enablers.¹⁷

People and institutions play a key role in both being enablers (for instance, through the role of connectors and enablers between communities and the wider system, rather than just service providers), and supporting enablers for ongoing social capital creation.

Examples of Social Capital Enablers*	
Support systems & opportunities	The meeting of basic settlement needs
	Opportunities for social and cultural connection
	Assistance in linking with opportunities
	Connecting to wider society (including through community orientation and education)
	Resources that help communities meet and develop internal support services
Education & employment pathways	Education, training and employment pathways
Supportive social & political environment	A social and political context promotive of equality and safety

*STARTTS, UNSW, Centre for Refugee Research, 2013. ‘The Glue that Binds’, Social Capital in Refugee Communities Settling in Australia

16. STARTTS, UNSW, Centre for Refugee Research, 2013. ‘The Glue that Binds’, Social Capital in Refugee Communities Settling in Australia

17. Feedback correspondence from STARTTS, January 2024



A shared understanding and vocabulary through social capital

Much settlement CCB work already builds towards strengthening bonding, bridging, and linking social capital, even if the social capital approach and the three types of social capital are not explicitly outlined.

One major desire for outlining the social capital framework in the Settlement CCB Discussion Paper is to foster a shared understanding for settlement stakeholders – including a shared *vocabulary* or lexicon while discussing CCB aims and activities. In this case, we might meaningfully hear that what a CCB practitioner is trying to do is to build “bridges” between one social group and other communities in the same local area; or working to build “links” between a newly-arrived group with policymakers and decision-makers through building ethnic association institutional capacity to apply for and implement grant programs to support their community. This shared vocabulary would fortify a settlement sector-wide understanding of and direction for CCB.

Providing Connection for New Arrivals in Early Settlement

Providing opportunities for community-based connection which enable belonging is a critical aspect of community capacity building with communities. Especially true in the early stages of settlement, the role of communities in welcoming new arrivals is critical for settlement wellbeing. Activities where new arrivals can connect also provide an opportunity for community members to share their lived experiences in ways that are grounded to need (including their hints and tips for settlement). Therefore, supporting communities to have events for new arrivals is important for both welcome and connection as well as orientation based on lived experience. It also builds a solid foundation for community participation because community members are aware of how they can access their community.

Strengthening communities to engage at the systemic level to overcome disadvantage and reduce vulnerability and pursue community aspirations

The core goals include:

- To increase the strengths and capacities of communities to meet their needs and aspirations in Australia.
- To reduce vulnerability within communities.

In addition to a focus on social capital building, another important aspect of community capacity building in a settlement context relates to strengthening communities to overcome disadvantage.

A key role of agencies delivering community capacity building relates to building the strengths and capacities of communities to meet their needs and aspirations in Australia. This involves identifying existing community strengths and assets as well as aspirations. If aspirations are not understood, there is a risk that activities will not be relevant to community members.

Another way to increase the strength and capacity of a community is to invest in leadership support and development. This includes supporting leaders to effectively advocate around the needs and barriers being experienced by their community. Because communities from refugee backgrounds have likely experienced pre-arrival conflict, important community capacity building activities can include promoting opportunities for dialogue within communities that are positive for healing and cohesion.

Another important role of agencies engaging in community capacity building relates to reducing vulnerability within communities. Activities which enable social inclusion of more vulnerable people within a community are important for reducing disadvantage. This may include activities which promote understanding of the voices of all members of communities, including those most vulnerable (women, young people, ethnic or

religious minorities). Additionally, activities which lead to stigma reduction are important, especially in relation to mental health, addiction, domestic and family violence, and sexual and gender-based violence.

Assisting communities to become prepared for the future

The core goals include:

- Understanding the potential impacts of the future so that communities are not 'left behind' to become further disadvantaged.
- Proactively engaging to access the knowledge and resources that communities need to adapt to the future.

There are numerous megatrends which are shaping our future. These include climate change, the increasing influence of artificial intelligence, as well as transitions in the labour market. There is a risk that if communities are not able to transition, that they will be left behind or become inadvertently disadvantaged due to greater impacts on health, wellbeing and economic security. For example, it is likely that increasing climate change will lead to greater impacts on health (including the effects of heat and/or natural disasters on people with health vulnerabilities including the elderly, chronically ill, pregnant women and infants). Ensuring that people have the knowledge and means to keep themselves cool is an important way to help communities to prepare for the future. CCB has an important role to play in partnering with communities towards ensuring adaptability and inclusive responsiveness towards unfolding and future issues – directly linking to the self-agency and self-efficacy of communities.

Framework for CCB in Settlement

The focus areas and social capital approach form the basis for a shared framework for the settlement sector to coalesce around. The bones of this framework are:

1. The primary goals of settlement CCB
2. The main objectives under each of these goals
3. The indicators of success
4. Better practice strategies, including successful examples that can be learnt from

Goal 1: To develop more cohesive communities (community building – to increase a community’s bonding social capital)		
Objectives	Indicators of Success	Strategies
To increase community cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in the number of people who identify themselves as members of the community. • An increase in reported friendships from within the community. • An increase in the number of social gatherings with enjoyable activities that build relationships within the community. • An increase in the number of community members participating in community events. • A reduction in community conflict. 	<i>For sector development</i>
To enhance intergenerational relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in community events when enable dialogue and promote understanding between generations. • An increase in feelings of trust between young people and adults/elders • An increase in understanding of intergenerational issue. 	<i>For sector development</i>

A fuller version of this framework appears as an annex to the Discussion Paper, though this is still designed to be an initial point for discussion and development by the settlement sector.

CCB informed by settlement principles

In addition to any guiding approach, model and framework, settlement CCB would still centre core principles of settlement.

Principle 1. People-centred

Settlement CCB must place people at the centre of all practice, with decisions made with each individual and community's unique considerations in mind. Mutually beneficial partnerships respect – and respond to – the preferences, rights, needs, aspirations, and values of people that settlement work with. Furthermore, goals, outcomes, and CCB activities should be tailored to different circumstances. This is closely linked to the community-led and context-informed components of the proposed settlement CCB framework.

Principle 2. Intersectional

Settlement CCB recognises and responds to the interdependent systems, structures, and socially ascribed categories or identities, including race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, religion, and disability. These intersecting categories, and how they interplay with one another, can determine a person's relevant position of privilege or disadvantage in the community and wider society. This is relevant to CCB in terms of intersectional dynamics, for instance, the role gender plays in power and privilege, leadership, and settlement. CCB which takes an intersectional lens will be more acutely aware of the importance of these interlinked categories and dynamics.

Principle 3. Self-agency

Settlement principles focus on the power that individuals have to think and act for themselves, prioritise ownership over their own outcomes and goals, and pathways to achieve those. As agency can take both individual and collective form (as discussed in the section on the Australian Government *Refugee and Humanitarian Settlement and Integration Outcomes Framework*), self-agency is a core component across the proposed Settlement CCB Social Capital Model.

Principle 4. Evidence-based practice

Settlement practice, including CCB, should be based on knowledge, learning, and evidence, to the benefit of individuals and communities.

Principle 5. Culturally responsive support

Settlement CCB practice should be respectful of, and relevant to, the cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic priorities and needs of communities.

Principle 6. Trauma informed support

Trauma informed practice is based on knowledge and understanding of how trauma affects people's lives and their needs, in so ensuring that people are not re-traumatised. This is discussed also in Factor 8 The Role of CCB in Trauma Recovery – of why CCB is important in settlement.

Part 3. Barriers and challenges in settlement CCB and methods to overcome them

Part 3 of the Discussion Paper examines common challenges experienced in settlement CCB, and puts forward potential methods to overcome them. This is intended as a learning exercise: Identifying shared issues so that settlement stakeholders – including settlement CCB providers, government and policymakers, and peak bodies – can collectively work to address them and enhance CCB and settlement across the country.



3a) Measuring what matters in CCB

Successful CCB can prove difficult to measure. The current arrangements for data and reporting through DEX can often struggle to properly 'incentivise' what is actually needed in settlement CCB.

For example, organisations can implement a series of information sessions with high numbers of participants. The high number of outputs might "look good" when seen in raw data terms.

But it does not necessarily lead to good outcomes.

This can mean that what is currently being implemented, funded for, and incentivised in CCB is not what should actually be aimed for.

If settlement providers *think* they are being measured on numbers of participants and Standard Client Community Outcomes Reporting (SCORE) feedback from those participants, then there may be unintended incentives towards activities that maximise these, rather than CCB that moves the needle and creates lasting change over time. The incentives would be for settlement providers to "protect" their funding, knowing that staff livelihoods are dependent on it.

A plurality of settlement stakeholders stressed that CCB cannot be a tick-box service.

While this is true for much of settlement, it is even more pronounced for CCB, where quantitative data inputs and reporting face challenges in capturing the work, value, and outcomes of capacity building.

- Government, peak bodies, and settlement providers can collaborate and share transparent standards of how CCB is understood, measured and assessed across the sector. Disseminating that CCB is not understood or evaluated on sheer volume of participants (for instance, at information sessions), will help preclude the perceived incentives of these types of activities. In turn, this will help settlement agencies know with certainty that they can focus on in-depth work which builds meaningful community capacity, but which may be harder to capture quantitatively. Settlement providers will also benefit from knowing that all actors in the sector are working towards these shared outcomes.

- A shared data framework could build off pre-existing indicators, such as the Forum of Australian Services for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (FASSTT) social capital indicators and tools. CCB specialists note that other elements of capacity building outside of social capital would benefit from the development of shared indicators.¹⁸
- The settlement sector should further develop data standards and practices that respect the rights, privacy and time of clients, as well as harmonisation regarding intellectual property, data sharing, and ethics. Connections to relevant and related work, such as the Settlement Council of Australia's (SCoA) Road to Belonging Strategy work in Monitoring and Evaluation, and FASSTT activities on CCB, could help bolster Settlement CCB data.

3b) Resourcing CCB

Across the settlement sector, there has been wide-ranging agreement that the lack of resources and funding for CCB in settlement posed considerable constraints on effective action and outcomes. Settlement stakeholders cited a mismatch between the funding deployed for short-term outputs (for example, for one-off information sessions) with the resources needed to do real, long-term community development work that makes impact. While there was also widespread recognition that more funding is not always the sole answer – nor a panacea – for issues, CCB does suffer from resource constraints in multiple ways.

CCB in particular needs senior, experienced staff driving the work.¹⁹ In working with community, CCB practitioners interface with community leaders, senior government and corporate leaders, and settlement leaders, all of which demands a certain level of expertise. The CCB work itself is built on bodies of evidence and skills that develop over time.

Furthermore, much CCB work occurs outside of regular hours. To successfully work with community, many members of whom work other jobs during weekday regular work hours, CCB practitioners regularly work in the evenings and on weekends – 7pm Zoom calls, evening leadership programs, and weekend workshops and community festivals.

Funding levels often means that CCB positions are often only at part-time equivalent hours or funding that could only cover roles lower on the SCHADS salary scale than what CCB demanded.

These issues have previously been exacerbated by the lack of indexation in the SETS CCB component grants over the program. This had effectively led to [approximate] 20% erosion over the span of the program given rising wages, which means settlement agencies are unable to fund the requisite Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staffing needed, presenting major organisational challenges.

Irregular hours with challenges in compensatory recognition, part-time hours, and effective funding-caps on career progression meant that talented CCB practitioners would often face choices on whether to keep working in the sector or move out of the sector to find more secure, stable and higher remunerated work.

One of the largest issues identified in CCB was that CCB is not funded for all organisations, nor for all geographic areas. While CCB was deemed to be centrally important to overall settlement work, the majority of SETS providers did not receive funding for CCB.²⁰ Furthermore, many areas did not have an organisation with CCB funding at all, including many regional areas where SETS providers were only contracted to conduct Client Services. Communities in these areas were therefore at a deficit, not benefitting from CCB.

18. Feedback correspondence with STARTTS, January 2024

19. SHADS Level 5 rather than Level 3.

20. The Grant Opportunity Guidelines (GOG) for the SETS 2024–2027 program has removed the separation between Client Services and Community Capacity Building, in a potentially promising sign for increased access to CCB funding for organisations.

Resourcing ethno-specific and community-based organisations

The 2017 Evaluation of SGP noted that ethno-specific organisations find it hard to access funding and support.

Similarly, the 2019 Review into Integration, Employment and Settlement Outcomes for Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants in Australia (Investing in Refugees, Investing in Australia) found that “[t]he valuable experience of community-based organisations is inadequately utilised, with their contributions too often being restricted to their role as contracted service providers.”

Beyond the funding of the professional service agencies, there is also a whole layer of settlement that is largely unfunded: The community associations and groups themselves, who are doing a significant amount of settlement work which is largely unfinanced and under-resourced. This contributes to community and community leader fatigue and burnout (outlined as another standalone challenge, below). The lack of funding also effectively means there is a gap in interagency coordination – efforts can be fragmented and duplicative. Additionally, the lack of funding equates to deficits in institutional strength and capacity – paramount in community leadership, independence, and ability to scale impact in settlement outcomes.

To properly support and fund ethno-specific, religious-specific, and grassroots community associations and organisations will require attention to the structure of funding in the community service and settlement sectors. Examples of reflections and suggestions on funding refugee-led organisations can be seen in *Inclusive Settlement Funding Model: The role of refugee-led organizations in Settlement* (Atem 2023).

CCB practitioners also noted that it requires critical reflection from settlement organisations on the notion that if CCB is done correctly, communities and CCB supported organisations (including refugee-led organisations) will develop to a point of applying for and receiving funding without support – creating a tension in that CCB may actually spur further competition for funding. This critical reflection also extends to applications for funding, and ongoing discussions on who may be best placed to serve communities in different aspects and ways, with smaller grassroots organisations at risk of being ‘crowded-out’ by larger and better resourced actors.

While resourcing and supporting ethno-specific and community-based organisations requires wider and ongoing discussion and analysis, CCB itself acts as one means towards partnerships with ethno-specific and community-based organisations, including recognition of their value and contributions.

- Extending funding to cover all geographic areas across Australia would mean that no communities would miss out from important CCB work.
- Continual indexation of grant funding would preclude the erosion of programs and staffing necessary to keep skilled practitioners in the sector and maintain CCB projects over time.
- Continue efforts to support the funding and resourcing of a diversity of settlement providers, including ethno-specific, religious-specific, refugee-led, and community-based organisations.

3c) A shared understanding: CCB takes time

CCB is not a short-term initiative, but instead builds in momentum over time. This occurs on an organisational level: CCB organisations noted that reputations grow as activities progress. This results in organisations building stronger partnerships with different stakeholders key in CCB efforts, including different levels of government. Trust between CCB implementers and community partners – all important in CCB – also takes time. Once that trust is developed and community partners know that CCB implementers are in it for the long-term, for the right reasons, and what can be expected, then real results can begin to occur. Addressing the determinants of social change – for instance determinants of health, or factors within domestic and family violence – requires intense work over time, rather than “throwing” more information at communities. The sector also wants to avoid expectations of ‘building capacity’ for a set number of communities in a certain timeframe, then moving on to other communities, when CCB has to be understood to be a long-term partnership with communities.

Time is also important for community partners. Processes within CCB will often not be completed within a particular funding cycle. Governance initiatives, grant applications, and institutional strengthening can take many years, before really beginning to bear fruit for a community.

These factors are important to acknowledge for expectations (including for measurement, discussed above). Meaningful CCB and community development work can rarely occur within a specific funding timeframe, with a shared understanding that time for CCB is variable, contextual, and is a core component (while still allowing for stakeholders to address performance issues).

3c) Challenges in collaboration in CCB

There have been low levels of collaboration between CCB organisations over the course of the SETS program. This is despite the tangible desire for partnerships and increased coordination.

One reason for the lack of collaboration has been the different directions and core types of activities within CCB, with providers even in the same geographic location noting that when approaching other providers, few synergies were identified.

Another reason is a building sense of competition. Linked to this was the topic of exclusivity in activities and consortia: CCB practitioners either were in-fact or perceived to be precluded from working with different agencies due to partnership and consortium arrangements. Settlement stakeholders noted that overcoming these barriers would mean that agencies could more effectively work together in their CCB initiatives, including sharing resources, better coordination of efforts, and the space for more effective partnerships.

Informing Practice: CCB Repository

During consultations, settlement providers and the Social Policy Group discussed how existing resources are shared and stored. This includes CCB tools and information, including in different languages. These discussions have spurred efforts to further strengthen the Resource Hub for the SETS Community of Practice, including the development of a repository for materials which would prove helpful for CCB practitioners across the country.

- While settlement practitioners pointed out that the SETSCoP Community Capacity Building Subgroup had been beneficial for linking across agencies, collaboration could be enhanced yet further.
 - › More regular convening of in-person meetings and workshops would increase ties. This can occur as part of the SETS Annual Forum, with dedicated time (for example, a half-day workshop) for all CCB practitioners to join together in facilitated work together.
- A shared settlement CCB framework should provide a foundation for improved collaboration across the sector.

3d) Community leader burnout

Community leader fatigue and burnout poses challenges within CCB work itself.

Community leaders and leadership at community associations are at the forefront of community development efforts but can frequently find themselves pulled in multiple directions and unable to sustain challenging efforts over time. Community leaders cannot “clock off” at 5pm – they may often receive emergency phone calls for various forms of help and support at nights, organise and join community meetings, festivals, and celebrations on weekends, and see community members they are supporting out shopping, at religious gatherings, and at sporting events. This is in addition to many working full-time jobs to support themselves and their families.

- The most successful CCB programs specifically support the wellbeing of community partners. This can come in a variety of forms and is both context-specific as well as individual-specific. It includes support in skills such as conflict resolution, networking and connection to role models and other pillars of support, and help setting boundaries.
- Additional efforts towards giving community leaders and community representatives the resources needed to do the settlement and community work they do, as well as better valuing and rewarding their time and efforts, would help address burnout and support settlement outcomes.
- Community leaders, leadership of community organisations, and community members engaged in CCB would benefit from increased specialised support. This includes a potential Community of Practice for community leaders, which would a) work to address community leader fatigue and burnout through reducing isolation and sharing best practice, b) work to increase social capital itself (bonding, bridging, linking) between community leaders and communities, and c) offer opportunities for dedicated wellbeing and professional development.

Discussion Idea: Diversity in Leadership

The emergence of incredible leaders from multicultural communities has been both an important impact of CCB in settlement as well as a driver of further capacity for communities. There are many prominent examples of women leaders, young leaders, and leaders part of the LGBTQI+ community.

Despite this, settlement stakeholders did identify that leadership composition and power dynamics can be a tricky area of CCB. Some communities might assign a traditional “wise old man”, who might not have the requisite skills to excel in broader CCB, or who might not connect with people across diverse communities. CCB also does not take place in a social vacuum, but must be attuned to social and power dynamics, including community fissures and frictions. Settlement stakeholders identified challenges where community leaders may be reluctant to share power, authority, and even information, and may be reluctant for younger people, women, or those from diverse backgrounds to take on further leadership responsibilities.

A discussion idea includes further emphasis on support and dedicated initiatives for diverse leaders to emerge, including building on existing examples of leadership programs for women, youth, and those not traditionally seen as leaders.

Conclusion: CCB in Settlement Moving Forward

When communities have enhanced capacity, it has major impacts on settlement outcomes. Community (associations, leaders, and members) work together with settlement providers and mainstream services, with community themselves leading efforts on the issues that matter most to them.

This discussion paper acts as another launching point for conversations to progress CCB in settlement. It defines CCB in settlement and collates why it is important in the first place. It also identifies challenges in CCB and posits potential ways the collective sector can overcome these barriers.

The discussion paper proposes a shared framework to shape efforts in CCB in settlement into the future.

CCB is central to successful settlement – the combined efforts of settlement stakeholders in CCB can foster settlement outcomes and lead to flourishing communities across the country.

Discussion Questions

1. What adaptations and changes could strengthen the Settlement CCB Guiding Framework for the settlement sector?
2. How can the Settlement CCB model and framework be made most beneficial and useful for communities and settlement organisations? What accompanying resources are needed?
3. What barriers and challenges do we need to overcome as a settlement sector in relation to CCB? How will we do so?

Next Steps

1. Co-design the expanded Settlement CCB Framework (including through the SETS Community of Practice).
2. Develop outcomes measurements (with exploration of collaboration with the FASSTT network and the Settlement Council of Australia's Road to Belonging).
3. Refine the workforce competencies associated with settlement CCB, linked to the National Workforce Competencies for Settlement Practitioners (2021), in recognition of the important domains, competencies and behaviours needed for the work.
4. Build linked human resource and practice resources and tools.
5. Create a 'Settlement CCB Showcase' which continues to detail the important CCB work being done in Australia, including through revisiting the 2021 SETSCoP *Models of Community Capacity Building in the delivery of Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS)*.

Annex: Framework for Settlement CCB (Initial)

Goal 1: To develop more cohesive communities (community building – to increase a community’s bonding social capital)		
Objectives	Indicators of Success	Strategies
To increase community cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in the number of people who identify themselves as members of the community. An increase in reported friendships from within the community. An increase in the number of social gatherings with enjoyable activities that build relationships within the community. An increase in the number of community members participating in community events. A reduction in community conflict 	<i>For sector development</i>
To enhance intergenerational relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in community events when enable dialogue and promote understanding between generations. An increase in feelings of trust between young people and adults/elders An increase in understanding of intergenerational issue. 	<i>For sector development</i>
To promote a sense of connection and belonging in young people about their history, culture and language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in opportunities to maintain community cultural practices (festivals, language classes, religious events). An increase in opportunities to maintain and develop community knowledge and skills in ways that are responsive to the needs of young people (dancing classes, cooking classes). 	<i>For sector development</i>
To increase social inclusion of more vulnerable people within a community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A reduction in reported social isolation of community members. 	<i>For sector development</i>
To increase the support within communities to help new arrivals to settle in Australia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in events and activities which provide opportunities for new arrivals to be welcomed into communities. Increase in reported support from community members received by new arrivals. 	<i>For sector development</i>
Goal 2: To welcome and connect new arrivals into their communities.		
Objectives	Indicators of Success	Strategies
Welcoming and connecting new arrivals into their community	<i>For sector development</i>	<i>For sector development</i>

Goal 3: To facilitate integration within the wider Australian community.		
Objectives	Indicators of Success	Strategies
To build relationships between new and emerging communities and more established communities from refugee and migrant backgrounds.	<i>For sector development</i>	<i>For sector development</i>
To increase links with the broader Australian community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in community activities which build connection between community members and the wider Australian community. 	<i>For sector development</i>
To increase understanding within the Australian community of the history, culture and traditions of communities from migrant and refugee backgrounds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in activities and events where communities are able to showcase their culture to the wider Australian community. 	<i>For sector development</i>
To promote greater equity and inclusion by the Australian community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in empathy and understanding within local communities to the experiences, strengths and hopes of communities from migrant and refugee backgrounds. 	<i>For sector development</i>
To promote positive adjustment into the new Australian environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in information available for community members on settlement adjustment and acculturation. A decrease in reported 'culture shock' 	<i>For sector development</i>
To increase knowledge and understanding of Australian First Nations Peoples including opportunities which promote reconciliation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in empathy and understanding about the continuing impact of Australian history for First Nations Peoples. An increase in opportunities to interact locally with First Nations people. 	<i>For sector development</i>
To increase knowledge and understanding of Australian history and culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in knowledge about Australian history An increase in 'cultural competency' ie understanding of important Australian cultural norms, so that people feel comfortable engaging in the wider Australian community 	<i>For sector development</i>

Goals for Strengthening Communities to Overcome Disadvantage

Goal 4: To link communities to the organisations and resources that they need to improve settlement outcomes.		
Objectives	Indicators of Success	Strategies
To increase the awareness of key services available to support members of the community.	<i>An increase in community members who:</i> <i>Know about services</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Are aware of their rights to access services</i> <i>Know how to access services (including knowing how to engage an interpreter).</i>	<i>For sector development</i>
To develop stronger relationships between a community and important service delivery and government agencies and businesses.	<i>For sector development</i>	<i>Know about services</i>
To increase access to English language learning	<i>For sector development</i>	<i>Are aware of their rights to access services</i>
To increase educational opportunities for all members and across all ages of a community.	<i>For sector development</i>	<i>For sector development</i>
To increase employment opportunities for all members of the community.	<i>For sector development</i>	<i>For sector development</i>
To enhance community understanding of Australian laws, rules, systems and norms.	<i>For sector development</i>	<i>For sector development</i>

Goal 5: To increase the strengths and capacities of communities to meet their needs and aspirations in Australia. (Community development – to support community leadership to build on the inherent strengths and assets of communities.)

Objectives	Indicators of Success	Strategies
To identify existing community strengths and assets as well as aspirations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A community designed map of the identified strengths and assets of the community. • A community designed map of the identified aspirations of the community. <p>A plan for the community to progress towards achieving aspirations.</p>	<i>For sector development</i>
To support effective community leadership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in positive contact between community members and community leaders • An increase in tangible support that community leaders can provide. • An increase in community leaders feeling that they have the knowledge and skills to be an effective leader in the Australian context. • Increased sense of trust in community leaders. 	<i>For sector development</i>
To promote dialogue about democratic community structures and community decision making processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in all members' participation in community structures • Establishment of transparent structures and processes • An agreed community vision and plan • Increased involvement of community members (not leadership) in the design of community activities. <p>Increased trust in community associations.</p>	<i>For sector development</i>
To increase the ability of community leaders to advocate including being able to effectively articulate to service providers the barriers, needs and aspirations of their community members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased confidence in the community's ability to advocate <p>Increased community participation in collective action to address shared difficulties.</p>	<i>For sector development</i>

Goal 6: To reduce vulnerability within communities.		
Objectives	Indicators of Success	Strategies
To promote understanding of the voices of all members of a community including those most vulnerable (women, young people, ethnic minorities).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in the involvement of vulnerable people in decision making processes within communities. • Establishment of structures (eg Management Committee sub-committees) that encourage the involvement of specialist groups (eg young people, women, people with a disability etc). <p>Establishment of leadership mentoring programs that target the inclusion of vulnerable sections within communities.</p>	For sector development
To reduce stigma within communities especially in relation to mental health, addiction, domestic and family violence, sexual assault.	For sector development	For sector development
To enhance the capacity of a community to help younger generations.	For sector development	For sector development
To improve understanding of supports for addiction (alcohol, drugs, gambling).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased understanding about addictions <p>Increased understanding of how to seek help in the Australian context.</p>	For sector development
To enhance safety for all community members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A decrease in exposure to all forms of violence including sexual and gender-based violence. • Increased understanding of how to address and manage conflict (including within families, between community members). 	For sector development

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The Social Policy Group (SPG) is a national, non-government, not-for-profit body with specialist expertise in social policy and program design with a focus on population diversity, social and community cohesion, gender equality, community participation and inclusion, systems' responsiveness, and community outreach and engagement.

The SETSCoP is a community of practice (CoP) bringing together service providers who support refugees and vulnerable migrants under the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) program. SETSCoP is facilitated by the Social Policy Group in partnership with settlement service providers to enable sharing and learning, and improve outcomes for people supported through the SETS program and the wider community.

