



BOUNDLESS DREAMS DOWN UNDER

Inspiring Young Migrants and
Refugees in Hume, Australia

WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

BROTHERHOOD OF ST. LAURENCE

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Inspiring Young Migrants and
Refugees in Hume, Australia

An Interactive Qualifying Project
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Science

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Brotherhood of St Laurence
Working for an Australia free of poverty



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CONTRIBUTIONS

Lily Brenner: Team designer. Researcher of employment and housing barriers migrants face, along with Youth Transitions as a whole. Developed Method 3, which discussed how to implement the media created. Held interviews with participants. Made all drawings used in the video. Contributed to editing and revising the entire report.



Michiba Toryu: Responsible for research and writing around immigrant demographics, the storytelling process, and some barriers faced by immigrants. Developed Method 2, which discussed the iterative design process. Lead technical aspects of the media production process by taking responsibility for the video editing, scripting, and planning out visuals that could be used. Contributed to edits and revisions across the entire report.



Emily Narouz: Conducted research on Australian views and opinions around immigration, the impact of migration on the economy, and the psychological aspects of inspiration, success, and storytelling. Used research on how to tell a good success story to guide the storyboarding process. Created the activity guide for use alongside the video.



David Gobran: Researched visas available to humanitarian migrants, resources and supports migrants draw upon to help with settlement, and how they overcome some of the barriers they face. Developed Method 1, authored the questions for the Focus Group, and facilitated it. Created subtitles for the video. Contributed to edits and revisions across the entire report.



ABSTRACT

The Brotherhood of St. Laurence (BSL) is a nonprofit organization in Australia that provides services to impoverished and disadvantaged people, including immigrant groups in the diverse city of Hume, Australia. Youth Transitions (YT), a program run by BSL, provides support for migrant and refugee youth aged 15-25 by facilitating employment and encouraging them to seek education. The goal of our project was to create media to inspire new arrivals to overcome challenges and seek new opportunities by learning from the experiences of successful peers. Our first step was to identify strategies and resources young migrants use to overcome the problems they face. We did this by conducting focus groups and interviews with successful migrant youth who used their resources to overcome obstacles. Next, we used an iterative design approach to develop a video based on the success stories we heard. Finally, we created three activities to help integrate the video into YT workshops based on our observation of those workshops. Our video used audio from the interviews, alongside hand-drawn, paper cutout stick figures and other custom visuals to personalize the stories. Our biggest takeaway was how these young people adopted a growth mindset and used their inner strengths to overcome language, identity, and structural barriers. We integrated this theme into our video in order to inspire other youth to do the same.

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INTRODUCTION

Every year, millions of people leave their homes for a variety of reasons – wars, oppression, hunger, or simply hope for the opportunity of a better life. A United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs report found that the number of people not living in their birth country had accumulated to over 280 million worldwide by 2020. Australia is a country that hosts many migrants, with over 30 percent of its population having migrated from other countries; this is more than many other English-speaking countries around the world (UNDESA, 2020). These migrants come with fresh perspectives and much-needed skills that have the potential to boost the economy and employment rates. However, the success immigrants hope for is hard-earned, as they contend with structural, language, and cultural barriers that threaten to hold them back from achieving their full potential. However, with proper support and encouragement during the first few years in their new country, these barriers can be overcome.

With its headquarters in Fitzroy, Victoria, The Brotherhood of St. Laurence (BSL) is a social justice organization that works to prevent and alleviate poverty across Australia, and support for migrants and refugees is one of its key focuses. The non-profit is run by over 1,400 volunteers and professional staff members who aim to accomplish their mission of tackling disadvantage through both research and direct action (Brotherhood of St. Laurence, 2022). Over the past eight years, BSL has run the Youth Transitions program in many cities, including Hume, Victoria. The program provides young people newly arrived to Australia with mentoring, education, career coaching, job preparation, and ultimately the guidance and inspiration they may need to become established in their new country (BSL, n.d.).

Hume, located in Melbourne, is a culturally diverse local government area with a rich history. Its 27 suburbs are home to over 250,000 residents, which are represented by more than 160 countries. Hume represents a major landing point for newly arrived people to Melbourne; nearly 40% of Hume residents were born overseas (Hume City Council, 2021).

Youth Transitions (YT) has been significant in helping young immigrants develop a growth mindset. This mindset is a pillar of BSL's Advantaged Thinking approach which emphasizes focusing on the strengths and potential of individuals in order to inspire future growth and success (Howie et al., 2019). As there is evidence that exposure to success has the capacity to inspire others (Kaufman, 2011), BSL is seeking ways to share inspirational stories with new arrivals at the start of the YT program, hoping to create a powerful experience that will help new participants develop a sense of assurance for the future and see their own capacity for success. A way to achieve this could be to have a repository of digital success stories—stories of young arrivals that participants can relate to and that BSL coaches can draw upon to use in initial workshops with the youth. This would not only better equip BSL coaches to provide more personalized and relevant content but could also be circulated widely through social media to reach even more youth.

Thus, the goal of our project is to inspire new arrivals to overcome challenges and seek new opportunities by learning from the experiences of successful peers. In order to achieve this, we did the following: identified strategies and resources young migrants use to overcome the problems they face, developed media based on the success stories we heard, and developed discussion activities to help integrate the media into the Youth Transitions workshops and other social media.





BACKGROUND

This chapter briefly overviews immigration in Australia, and in Hume City specifically. We identify common obstacles to new arrivals, then discuss some of the supports that aid migrants in their settlement: education, community, and social services, noting how the Brotherhood of St. Laurence connects young people to these resources. Finally, we delve into specifics on why and how media portraying success stories of young migrants can be useful in inspiring young arrivals to see that success is attainable.

Immigration to Australia

Although immigration has played a big role in Australia's development since it became a British colony in 1788, the state of immigration in Australia has changed quite significantly over the country's history. Right after its federation in 1901, Australia passed the Immigration Act, also known as the "White Australia Policy," which allowed immigration officers to prevent "undesirable" immigrants (who usually weren't White) from entering the country (National Archives of Australia, n.d.). These policies were repealed in 1958 and then later counteracted with the Immigration Discrimination Act of 1975, when the country finally began accepting more non-European immigrants.

Currently, Australia offers five visa types for refugees and humanitarian migrants, the target demographic for our project. Refugee and Global Special Humanitarian visas offer permanent stay and social service benefits that we will later discuss, but they also require migrants to apply or be referred to obtain the visas before arriving in Australia (Department of Home Affairs, 2023). Temporary Protection and Safe Haven visas are for people seeking asylum from their home countries. They last three and five years respectively and do not require possession upon entering the country, but they do not offer as many benefits as the permanent visas (Department of Home Affairs, 2023). Those seeking to extend their stay after the three to five-year period may apply for a permanent Protection visa if they can prove that they are unable to return to their home country due to persecution (Department of Home Affairs, 2020).

Even though Australia offers all these visas for those seeking asylum, the New York Times has noted Australia's approach to refugees as "among the strictest in the world" (Frost, 2023). Australia has strict policies regarding illegal immigration; the country mandates immigration detention for all "unlawful" arrivals in detention facilities, including those seeking asylum but failing to obtain a temporary visa (Loughnan, 2019). And even though temporary visa migration in Australia has doubled over the past 15 years, in many cases, migrants never gain permanent residency (Boucher, 2023).

Benefits of Immigration

As of 2012, 60% of Australia's net population growth came from overseas migration (Simon-Davies, n.d.) and the country is becoming more dependent on immigrants. The Australian government recognizes the need for certain kinds of skills, particularly in the healthcare, construction, and education sectors. One of the steps that they have put in place to encourage skilled immigrants to come to the country is establishing the 2023-2024 Permanent Migration Program which grants permanent visas for immigrants to stay in Australia indefinitely. People can either apply for this visa or receive an employer-sponsored visa based on skill shortages in the market. The intent of the program, alongside with creating incentives to attract skilled migrants to the country, is to "build resilience, boost productivity, and to support [its] economy as it transitions to net-zero emissions" (Australian Government Productivity Commission, 2016).

This approach underscores Australia's commitment to leveraging immigration not only as a means of addressing immediate labor deficiencies but also as a strategic move to strengthen long-term economic sustainability. The Australian government hopes to address these skills shortages by attracting highly skilled young immigrants by providing them with permanent residence.

In an article from the George W. Bush Institute, Pia Orrenius delves into the economic contributions of immigrants and their role in growing the economy.

“When immigrants enter the labor force, they increase the productive capacity of the economy and raise GDP. Their incomes rise, but so do those of natives. It’s a phenomenon dubbed the “immigration surplus.”

-Orrenius, 2016

Immigration plays a pivotal role in the growth and production of an economy. Productivity levels increase with immigrants because, on average, immigrants tend to be in the prime working age group and are relatively highly educated. A high percentage of younger immigrant workers participate in the workforce which, in turn, expands the labor market and directly stimulates the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country.

Moreover, immigrants often bring a diverse array of customs and knowledge, fostering innovation and progression. This influx of fresh perspectives as well as talents and skills can lead to a more dynamic and

adaptive economy, allowing the country to remain competitive in next-generation technologies.

Research and analytics show that these skills can even be transferred to the resident Australian population, coming with economic benefits (Australian Government Productivity Commission, 2016). Thus, it is evident that immigration serves as a multifaceted driver of economic prosperity, enriching the nation in a variety of ways.

Currently, the most common permanent visas aside from skilled work visas are family visas; those with other family members already in the country can apply to join their relatives and gain permanent residence.



Immigrants in Hume City

We worked with newly arrived youth in and around Hume City, located in the northwest corner of the Melbourne Metropolitan Area (see Figure 1). Hume contains suburbs such as Tullamarine and Broadmeadows, and also includes Melbourne Airport.

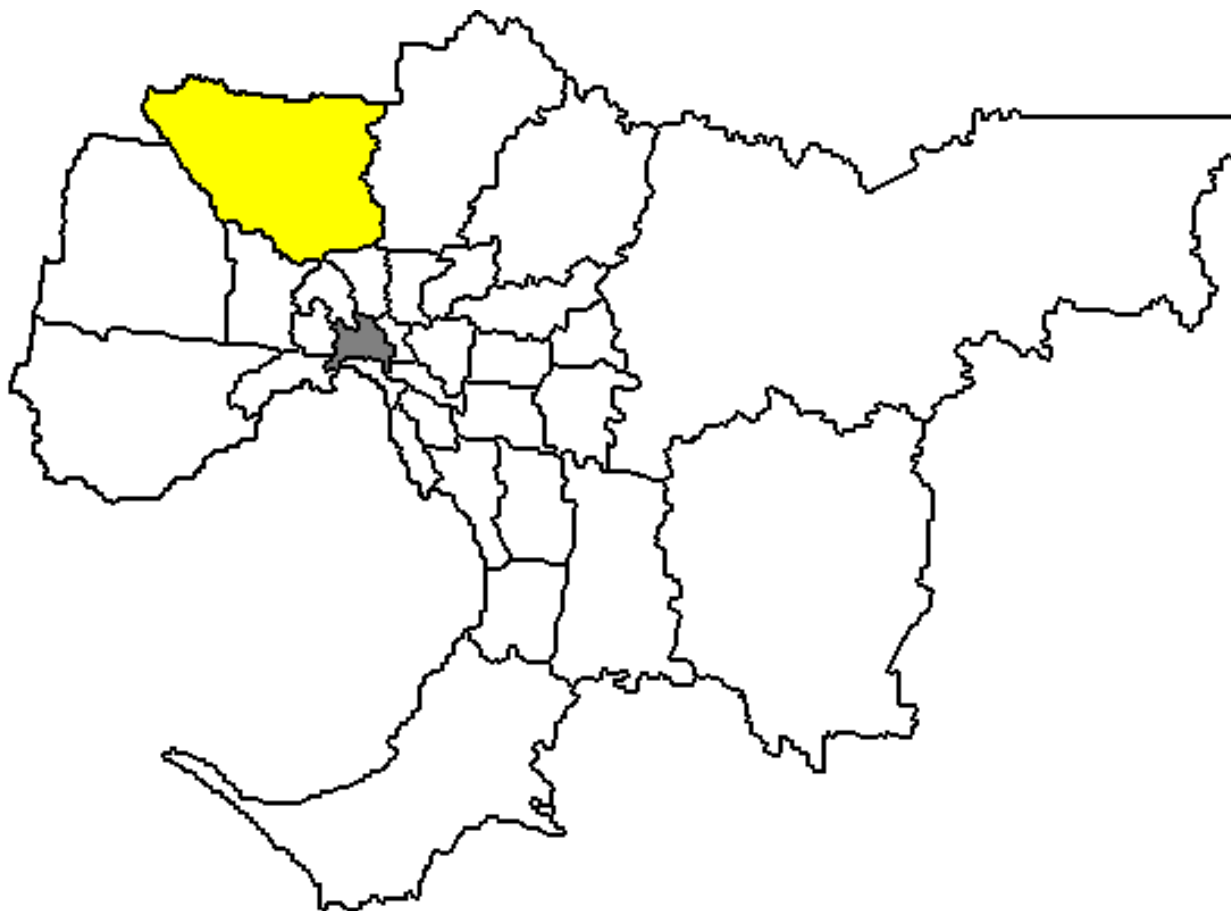


Figure 1: Hume's location relative to Melbourne

Because it is on the outskirts of Melbourne, Hume boasts more affordable housing opportunities for both immigrants and young families while still being connected to Melbourne's train and highway networks (.id, 2021). Economically, Hume is primarily fueled by the working class, particularly skilled and unskilled laborers. There are many Hume-based businesses in goods warehousing/transportation and construction. Compared to the state of Victoria as a whole, in 2021 Hume's workers consisted of slightly more technicians/trade workers (14.9% vs 12.6%), more machinery operators/drivers (13.1% vs 5.9%), and fewer professionals in law, technology, and the arts (14.8% vs 25.0%) (.id, 2021). This may explain a lower average income compared to Victoria and the city of Melbourne; fewer Hume workers earned an income of more than \$1,750 a week, 19.5%, compared to both Melbourne at 24.2% and Victoria at 22.5% (.id, 2021).

The affordability of homes and availability of jobs in industries such as warehousing may make Hume an attractive spot in which to settle down. As such, its population is very immigrant-heavy compared to the rest of Melbourne, with about two in every five Hume residents being born overseas (Hume City Council). This means that, more so than the whole of Australia, Hume's economy relies upon its immigrant population, meaning the success of immigrants in Hume is a success for the city as a whole.

Hume’s overseas-born population comes from a variety of backgrounds, with South Asia and the Middle East being the two most prevalent birth regions of immigrants in Hume. According to data compiled by Informed Decisions (adapted in Figure 2), India is the most common country of origin, followed closely by Iraq, and then Turkey. Other Middle Eastern countries such as Lebanon and Syria, and South Asian countries such as Pakistan and Sri Lanka round up the top 7. Notably, when compared to the entirety of Melbourne, Hume also has fewer immigrants from English-speaking countries such as New Zealand and the UK. This may mean that language barriers (as we will discuss later) may be more of a challenge for Hume’s immigrants in comparison to surrounding areas in and around Melbourne.

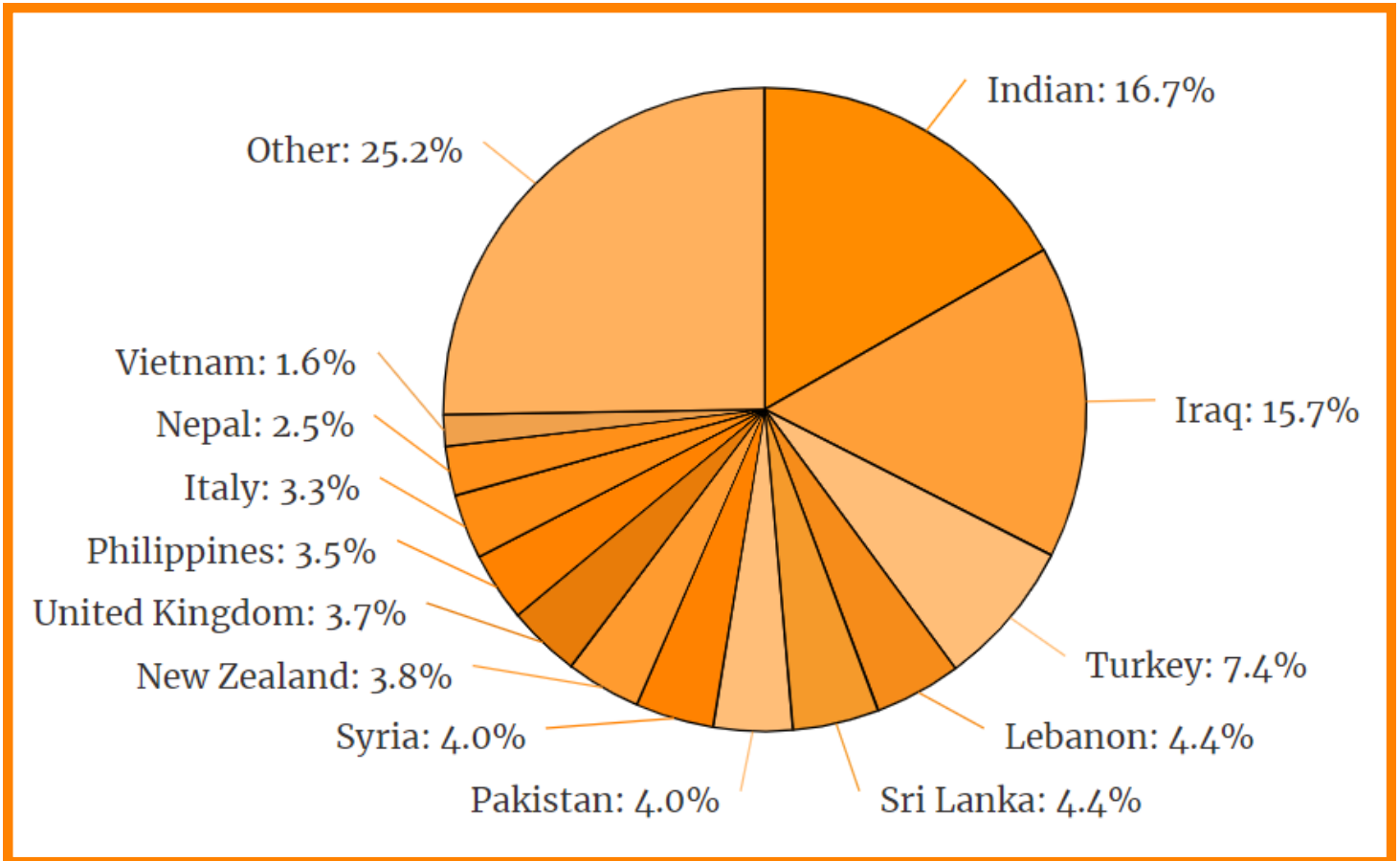


Figure 2: Hume’s immigrant demographics, adapted from .id, 2021

People migrate to Australia for a variety of reasons. For instance, people from India tend to migrate as skilled workers with computer or engineering-related skills (Museums Victoria, 2017). Iraqis fled their country during the turmoil and aftermath of the Gulf War, especially ethnic and religious minorities (Evanson, 2017). More recently, Iraqis have been coming to Australia to join with families settled here or as skilled migrants (Museums Victoria, 2017). Finally, many Turkish immigrants came to Australia during a period of unemployment and overcrowding in their country between 1967 and 1974, and many family members have followed those who moved during that period (Museums Victoria, 2017). Three main drivers for immigration are thus opportunity in work or education, turmoil in the home country/region, and reunion with families who settled here previously. Hume hosts the highest number of migrants Humanitarian Stream out of any government area in Victoria (Victorian Refugee Health Network, 2023). This may mean that fewer people immigrate to Hume from positions of pre-established wealth or because they possess sought after professional skills; instead they fled their countries because they had to, adding to the adversity that any migrant would need to overcome. This highlights the need for material and emotional support in Hume specifically, as well as other communities like it.

Obstacles that new arrivals may face in settlement

The Australian Government defines settlement as “the time of adjustment as migrants and new arrivals seek to become oriented, established, integrated and independent in their communities (Department of Home Affairs, 2019). One type of obstacle common to settlement is adjusting to a new culture. The settlement period involves some degree of culture, class, and intercultural negotiation for the individual, whose identity may be shifting. A paper in the Journal of School Health by Delores C.S. James (1997) describes two different outcomes: assimilation and acculturation. James has explained that assimilation involves giving up ideas or values from one's original culture in order to blend in with new peers. This differs from acculturation, in which an immigrant integrates the ideas, behavior, and activities of their host country's culture into their identity without abandoning their original culture (James, 1997). James claims that acculturation is the favorable approach and that immigrant children in schools who receive help in “embrac[ing] both cultures” have a more “integrated sense of self”. Acculturating rather than assimilating can help immigrants contextualize their history in their country of origin with where they find themselves after moving. However, young immigrants, especially school children, can feel pressured to assimilate more quickly in order to be accepted by other children (James, 1997). It is important for institutions and communities to have measures to relieve the pressure to assimilate and find ways to help immigrants preserve and contribute to their heritages.

The Cultural Orientation Resource Center (CORC) categorizes immigrant and refugee acclimation in a new country into four stages (Figure 3): “honeymoon phase,” cultural shock/depression, recovery, and finally balance/adjustment/integration.

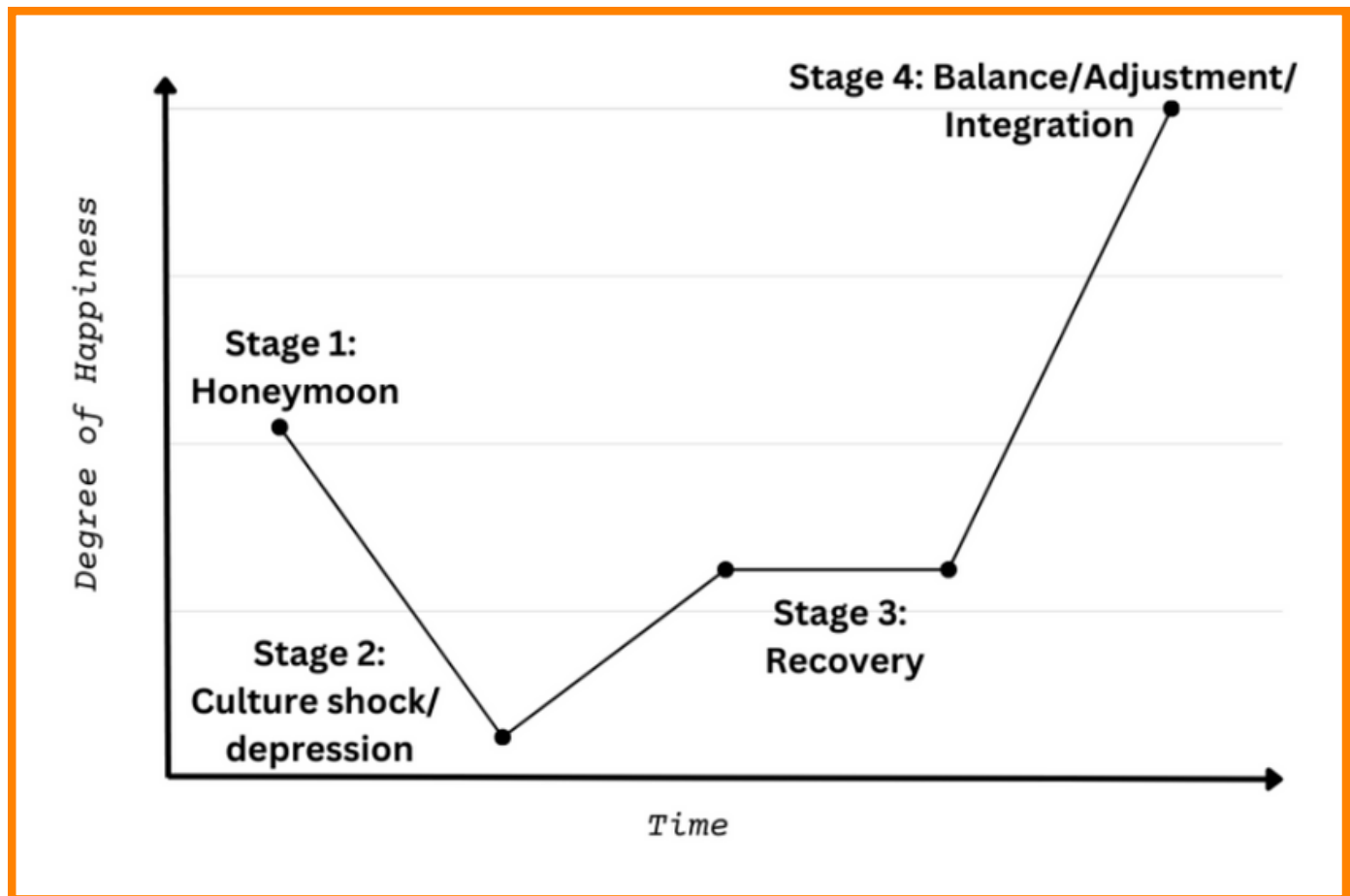


Figure 3: Cultural adjustment graph adapted from CORC

Once the excitement of the new country has worn off, many will experience cultural shock, the lowest point in an immigrant's acclimation journey. Signs of culture shock resemble those of depression. Many migrants report feelings of not being able to like anything in their new country (CORC, n.d.). Creating a healthy sense of identity is important, especially for immigrant adolescents; however, this process of coming to a concrete sense of identity is difficult and can take time (James, 1997). Furthermore, an immigrant's sense of self can be complicated in the process of acculturation and intergenerational conflict (James, 1997). For instance, if there is already an established ethnic community where an immigrant is settling, then there is a question of whether to identify with that community and members of the older generation or with their new country. As an example, James notes that US Immigrants from countries such as Jamaica and Haiti are often stereotyped, seen as belonging to, and treated as if they were in the same group (the larger "Black community"), even though they may have very different cultural backgrounds. As a result, the children in these immigrant families begin to identify with this group and may abandon their unique Caribbean identity, sometimes to the chagrin of their parents.

Employment is yet another challenge that immigrants face. For those still looking to further their education, securing employment becomes slightly easier as they have more time to build connections, create relationships, and meet industry professionals while in school. Those moving to a new country already having an established career may experience underemployment and unemployment (Arnita, 2022) as credentials may not transfer from one country to another. An individual could be a doctor in their home country, and then move and have no valid professional license or certification in their new country. In addition, gaps in cultural literacy and knowledge of the "system" can make securing employment much more challenging.

For young migrants and refugees, trying to secure housing while acclimating to a new country can be very difficult. This challenge often takes priority over identity and career development. In Australia specifically, there has been an ongoing housing shortage over the last twenty years. Based on a 2021 census, 122,494 people were estimated to be experiencing homelessness, with 23 percent falling between the ages of 12 to 24 years old (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021). In addition, housing waitlists are often many years long, with very few affordable rental options available and large investors buying up many properties. Not having secure housing can create uncertainty and hardship, forcing a delay in the young people's establishment process within Australia.

Many of the barriers migrants face are accentuated by a lack of proficiency in the host language. In surveys of over 1,500 young migrants in Australia, language was identified as being the greatest barrier to settlement (Department of Social Services, 2017). Without the ability to communicate clearly, seeking employment, housing, and support in general becomes that much more difficult. This is especially relevant in Hume where as of 2021, the top five languages spoken at home did not include English. Of the 119,020 residents of Hume who spoke a language other than English at home, 20,319 reported difficulty speaking English (.id, 2021).

Obstacles

- Culture shock
- Unemployment
- Housing
- Language
- Mental & Physical Trauma
- Discrimination

Although language barriers generally decrease with age (Department of Social Services, 2017), the language barrier still seems to be a formidable one for young migrants. However, once one learns the language, forming social connections and adapting to the culture becomes much easier. This is illustrated in a study conducted by anthropologist Pranee Liamputtong and undergraduate researcher Hala Kurban, who interviewed ten young Middle Eastern refugees in Melbourne in order to identify how refugees addressed the barriers they faced (2018). Although all the participants said that language was initially a significant barrier for them, once they started learning English, they gained confidence that helped them feel more accepted in their Australian community while also making daily life much easier (Liamputtong & Kurban, 2018).

An often overlooked but very significant stressor for immigrants is the mental and physical injury that some have endured before or during the migration process to their new country. In fact, these experiences are one of the major drivers for migration. These can include unhealthy conditions in their country of origin, trauma from the experience of migrating, and any shifts that occurred due to family staying behind (Dow, 2011). If a family flees their country in anticipation of turmoil, then they may have time to plan for being in a new country and to bring all of their belongings with them. However, many families are not afforded this luxury, and arrive in shock, after enduring traumatic events or abruptly leaving behind family and possessions, with little left to their name (Dow, 2011). This is a significant source of both material and psychological stress, with the impacts seen through refugees' behavior in the years after their arrival (Dow, 2011). As such, specific directed support should be provided to those who experience trauma during migration.

One final obstacle that immigrants may face in their settlement is discrimination. A 2018 survey conducted by The Migrant Workers Centre in Australia cited in the Guardian in 2023 investigated immigrant workers' experiences in Australia. Half of the 1000 workers surveyed noted that they feel unsafe at work, experiencing discrimination, bullying and verbal abuse (Convery). Discrimination targets one's sense of belonging in a community and often manifests in small acts of microaggressions. These seemingly harmless comments can dramatically impact the way a migrant feels that they are perceived by society. An ABC News report from 2022 tells the stories of Yatha Jain who experienced extensive racist jokes as a young migrant child in Australia. She says that even by kindergarten, she knew that Australia was not the cohesive multicultural community that her parents had heard about. Yet Jain did not let this discourage her; she is now an advocate for others in similar positions, working as the chair of Prosper, a non-profit organization that helps children and families from marginalized backgrounds. She states that "We're not going to change anything until we start talking about racism openly" (Chamas & Itsines, 2022).



Resources and supports for migrants

Education is widely recognized as a key to success, as it provides the skills and knowledge needed for employment (University of the People, n.d.). In the context of migrant and refugee acclimation and acculturation, however, its importance becomes further amplified, as educational institutions are places where language is learned, social connections are made, and ultimately, culture is acquired.

Public education in Australia is generally free for migrants with valid visas, including both permanent refugee visas and temporary asylum ones (Refugee Council of Australia, 2022). While the Australian government subsidizes higher education, subsidies are only available for those with permanent visas, meaning asylum seekers may have to pay as much as A\$30,000 per year, the average cost of an undergraduate degree (Department of Education, n.d.; Hartley et al., 2018). The effects of these policies are evident in Hume in 2021, as 56.1% of the residents of Hume had completed Year 12 schooling compared to 64.3% of Greater Melbourne. Additionally, 4.2% of Hume residents were attending university in 2021 compared to 5.8% in Greater Melbourne (.id).

Migrants with access to education, develop significant resources for overcoming barriers. According to a paper by the National Education Roundtable Steering Group, education plays a crucial role in helping young migrants overcome language barriers in Australia (2020). The paper underscores the need for English as a second language (ESL) resources, bilingual support staff, and opportunities for students to interact with their peers. Another paper examined how migrants in South Africa achieved academic success and found that students who received additional support in the form of English language classes and mentoring programs were better able to overcome language barriers (Yu & Shandu, 2018).

Language classes, however, should not be the only facet of education that supports migrants. Queensland University of Technology researcher Sandra Taylor suggested that ESL teachers “bear the brunt” of supporting refugees in Brisbane high schools (2008). Rather than placing this responsibility on ESL teachers alone, schools should offer holistic support systems to address the lingering psychosocial difficulties of some refugees (Major et al., 2013). An example of what this holistic support in schools looks like

can be found in a recent study conducted in Belgium, Denmark, Norway, and the United Kingdom on refugee and migrant youth aged 11 to 23. The study examined the impact of two school programs, both of which involved group discussions and workshops on mental health, encouraging students to seek help from friends and families when needed. One of the programs was found to have a significant positive effect on students’ perceived support from their families, as they learned they could always trust family members with their troubles (Spaas et al., 2023). A similar study in Finnish schools proposed adding a teacher training program to address how to best serve migrants along with the above classroom programs (Kankaanpää et al., 2022). As existing research emphasizes the positive influence of family and friend support on mental health, a significant obstacle for migrants (Spaas et al., 2023), these psychosocial programs prove to be promising sources of support in education.



ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

TAFE (Technical and Further Education) schools are similar to technical schools in the United States, and offer a wide range of vocational education and training courses that are designed to provide practical, work-based skills to students (Studies in Australia, n.d.). As TAFE education typically only takes two years, it provides a more affordable way for migrants to quickly gain employment (Department of Home Affairs, 2021).

Building a community or extending one's own community by interacting with other groups can also be a key factor in overcoming barriers. Social capital refers to the resources and benefits that individuals and communities gain from their social networks and relationships (Lórinicz & Németh, 2022). In the context of migrant acclimation, there are two subsets of social capital to consider. Bonding capital refers to the emotional connections and support within a specific group or community, such as family, friends, or people from the same ethnic background (Xin, 2018). Bridging capital, on the other hand, involves connections between different groups or communities (Lórinicz & Németh, 2022). Some people might assume that migrants and refugees will prefer to bond within their own ethnic circles and avoid bridging to the host culture. However, this may be misguided, as there is evidence that strong bonding capital within a refugee community leads to bridging capital (Strang & Ager, 2010). This is significant because forming connections with a host society helps migrants to "better navigate their new environment" (Murray, 2010).

Thus, identifying strong sources of community for migrants appears pivotal. In a study on what factors contributed to the success of young Sudanese refugees in rural Australia, Victoria Major et al. (2013) listed school, church, and sports as providing networks that would eventually bridge to the larger Australian community. Liamputtong and Kurban corroborate the significance of religious communities in supporting refugee youth in Melbourne (2018). When asked to map their neighborhoods and places they liked, a few participants indicated that churches were places that made them feel safe (see Figure 5 for one such map).



Figure 4: Kangan TAFE, located near BSL in Broadmeadows

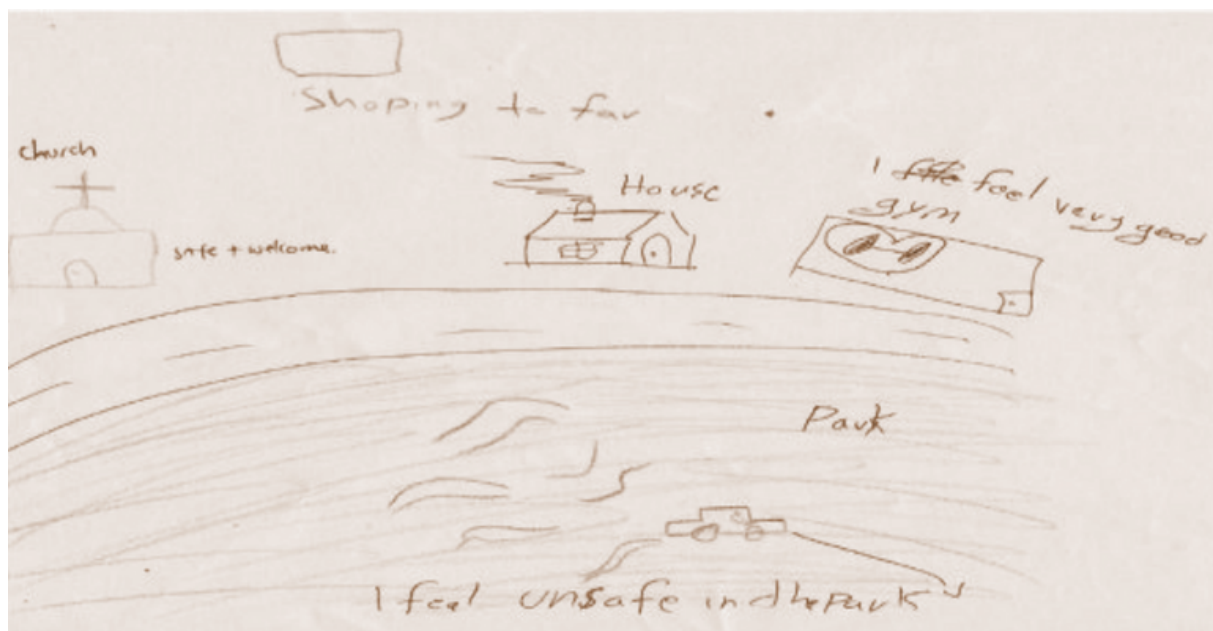


Figure 5: Community Map (Liamputtong & Kurban, 2018)

It is important to note the theme of safety here. In a survey of over 1,500 migrants aged 15-25 in Australia, feeling safe was selected as the number one factor that assisted their settlement (Department of Social Services, 2017). When considering the difficult backgrounds many of the migrants to Australia come from, a sense of security seems key to their acclimation.

Social support services aim to directly provide migrants with the resources needed to overcome the barriers they face. According to a study by Edward Makwarimba et al., the migrants they interviewed reported that social services had helped them find employment, reduce stress, and improve their physical and mental well-being (2010).

Migrants with qualifying visas (e.g., official refugee status) are able to take advantage of a variety of services provided by the Australian Government (Services Australia, 2022). These include universal health care through Medicare, employment-seeking assistance through Workforce Australia, and financial assistance payments through Centrelink (Doma et al., 2022; Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, 2022). For migrants who are still seeking asylum visas, the Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) provides a temporary subset of the above services, with future eligibility being determined by the Department of Home Affairs (Services Australia, 2023).

These benefits can have positive impacts. Liamputtong and Kurban's 2018 study of refugees in Melbourne, indicated that almost all the participants were satisfied with their health care. Additionally, the participants cited financial support from Centrelink as being helpful in their settlement. However, for many migrants who rely on assistance from Centrelink, receiving payments can be difficult due to language barriers and poor administration (Ozdemir & Hermant, 2022). Some of the participants in Liamputtong and Kurban's study confirmed this, as they indicated Centrelink as a place they disliked rather than one that provided them with support (2018).

The difficulties migrants have with getting help from services like Centrelink accentuates the need for further support in connecting to these resources. To address this, the Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) aims to help migrants become more self-reliant by helping them gain employment, education, and language skills (Department of Home Affairs, 2022). Learning the host language is especially important in the context of support services, as it facilitates the process of filling out complex applications and negotiating red tape. As such, the Australian Government conducts the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP), providing access to unlimited hours of English classes (Department of Home Affairs, 2023). In a survey of around 1,500 young migrants conducted by the Department of Social Services during the settlement period, over sixty percent cited AMEP as their method of learning English (2017).

Some individuals may require support even after the initial settlement period, (Liamputtong & Kurban, 2018). Ultimately, support services foster community connections and promote a sense of belonging, which are essential for migrants' overall well-being and integration into Australian society.

Supports

- Australia Government
- Medicare
- Workforce Australia
- Centrelink
- Status Resolution Support Services
- Humanitarian Settlement Program
- Adult Migrant English Program
- TAFE

Youth Transitions

Funded by the Department of Home Affairs, BSL’s Youth Transitions program assists 15–25 year-old individuals of migrant and refugee backgrounds. Their goal is to provide young people with the support and resources they need to achieve their educational and employment goals (Brotherhood of St. Laurence, 2023). Its three guiding principles are Advantaged Thinking, harnessing community effort, and young people at the center (Buick et al., 2023). Advantaged Thinking is a strengths-based approach that invests in an individual's abilities instead of their “problems.” It identifies their unique talents and capacities instead of focusing on what's “missing” with them (Howie et al., 2019).

The second guiding principle is harnessing community effort. The YT model relies on partnerships with the local government, community organizations (see Figure 6 for YT partners), local employers, and service/sporting clubs to recognize the good work and experiences taking place in Hume. These partnerships are a crucial part of building key relationships between the youth and their community. By working with and building on what the people and organizations in the community are already doing, migrants and refugees are able to transition into education or employment with the assistance of already established professionals.

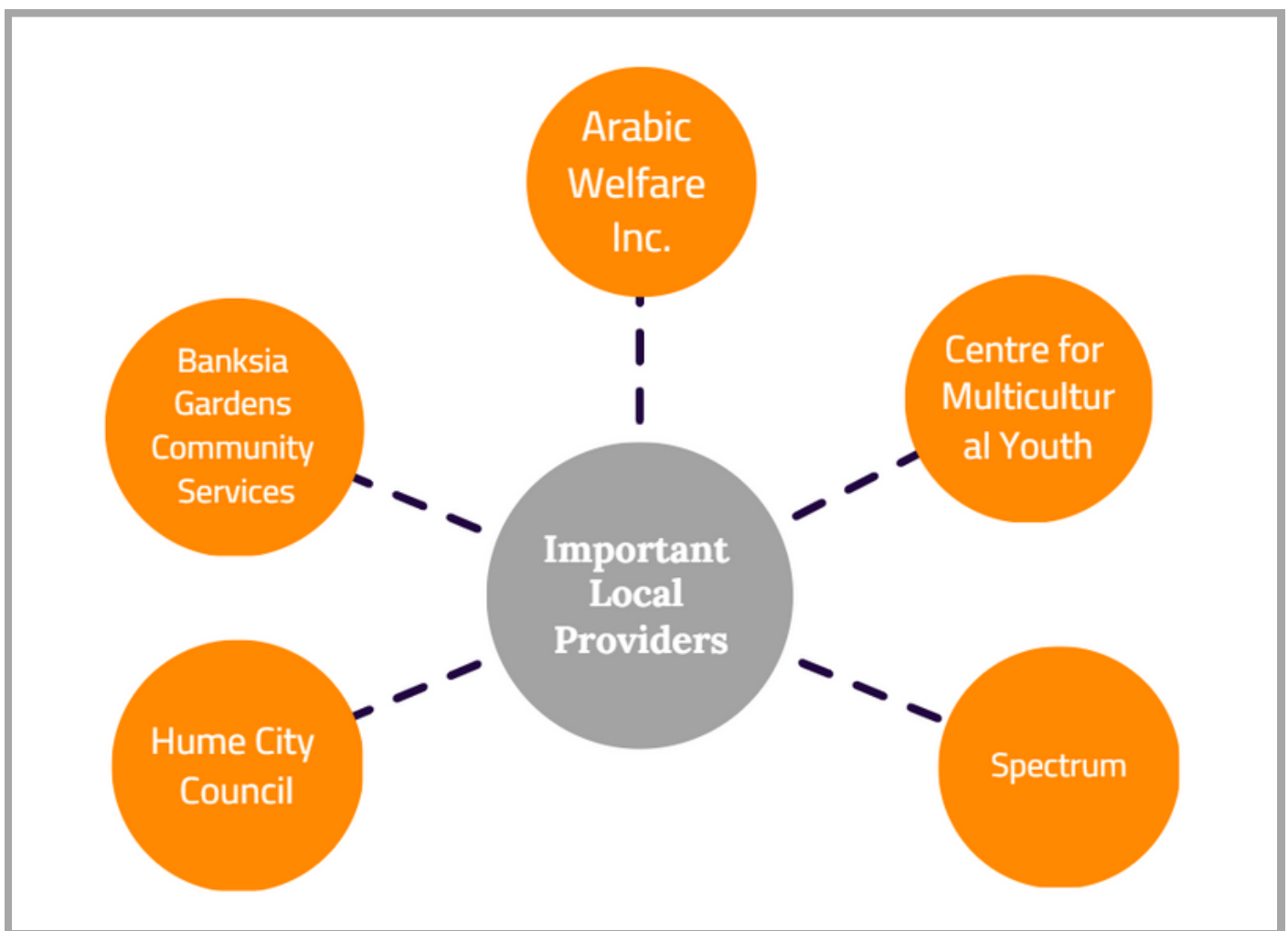


Figure 6: Local Providers working with YT in Hume

The third guiding principle is young people at the center of the approach. BSL recognizes that “all young people are different and require personalized opportunities to engage with the program” (Buick et al., 2023). To do this, the model is youth-settlement specific, flexible, and encouraging.

“Young people are in the best positions to come up with effective and creative solutions to issues that affect them and youth participation is essential to increase the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of any program”

- Oaktree, 2023

Youth advisory groups meet bi-weekly, and workshops and experiential learning sessions are all youth-led. In addition, participants are recruited to be on interview panels as needed. The youth are encouraged to be active participants and leaders in these programs.

Youth Transitions exposes youth to community facilities and dynamic environments to promote involvement, connections, and experience that will help youth achieve their educational or career goals. Figure 7 shows the opportunities included within these services. These are made possible with help and guidance from coaches trained by BSL, employers, teachers, and community members.

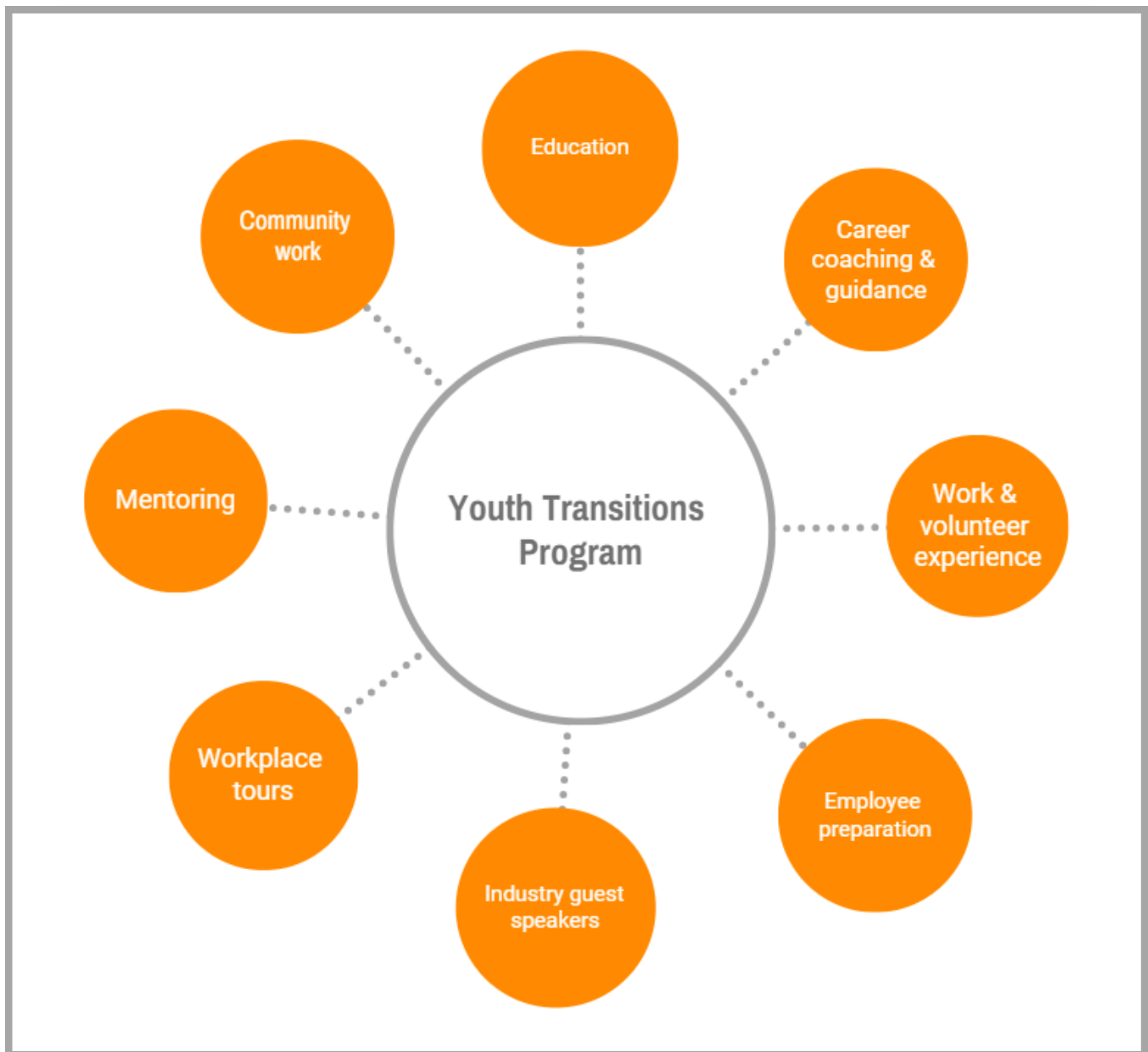


Figure 7: Opportunities within the Youth Transitions Program

The program guides youth through four phases of support (Figure 8). In phase 1, the biggest focus is on self-exploration. This takes place during the first two weeks after an individual opts into one-on-one coaching. During this time period, the youth articulate their talents and interests, set career and education goals, and identify challenges that may affect their pathway. The goal of our project was to share positive stories and create inspirational media that can be used to inspire a discussion at this stage, promoting growth mindset amongst the youth. Phases 2-4 focus on developing skills and real life experiences for achieving identified education or career goals.



Figure 8: Phases of Youth Transitions

In addition to coaching, pathway workshops are also offered. Taught by peers, coaches, and professionals, these are catered to each individual youth’s interest. Some example workshops are visiting the Shrine of Remembrance, painting, preparing for the drivers permit, or learning about work rights and workplace culture (Buick et al., 2023). If a youth member has something they are interested in, but no workshop exists, BSL can create one.

In order to reach youth outside of the actual workshops and coaching sessions, and to announce various resources and activities, BSL uses their website, YouTube channel, and Instagram but at the start of our project there was little existing media of the nature that we created.

Youth Transitions Impact

According to a report conducted by a consultant for the Department of Home Affairs, youth participating in YT became more involved, connected, and competent in their education, training, and relationships after completing the program (Department of Home Affairs, 2022). In all, the one-on-one coaching, workshops, and mentorships provided by BSL give young migrants and refugees the tools they need to succeed on their desired pathways, while also supporting their mental wellbeing and assisting in building community and professional connections.



Using Inspirational Stories to Initiate New Arrivals into YT Pathways

Stuart Levine in “Success Needs a Strong Story” (2017), argues that stories can have a much stronger impact than any other form of delivery when attempting to spark motivation. By gathering stories about how new arrivals overcame the obstacles they faced, we hoped to inspire others and show them success is possible. Newly arrived immigrants can achieve success, and learning from others' stories can inspire them to foster a growth mindset.

“Stories help us empathize with others. They make us feel a part of something larger than ourselves. Cognitive psychology describes how stories trigger emotional responses that drive memory and motivation. Neuro-imaging reveals that the brain does not distinguish between hearing a story and experiencing something in real life. Both activate the same region of the brain.”

- Levine, 2017

According to Levine, well-written success stories include three key features: persuasion through quantitative evidence, emotional engagement, and authenticity. Firstly, using numbers can build credibility. For example, Levine gives the example that instead of saying English helped a person get a job, they might say that “prior to taking English courses they had no job offers, but then after taking a year of English courses, they received 10 job offers.” The second key feature Levine highlights is the use of emotion in stories. People are much more motivated by emotion than by reason alone, and stories can trigger an emotional response in the audience. He notes that successful leaders often choose to tell stories to reach their audience. Finally, sharing personal experiences helps the listener visualize the scene and establishes a sense of trust between the speaker and audience. Being able to relate to the speaker through similar experiences is what creates an impactful piece.

In addition to these key aspects of success stories, there are also some baseline components that every story needs. These include things like the plot of the story, the setting that the story takes place in, the characters that the story follows, the story’s point of view, and the story’s main conflict (see figure 9).

5 KEY COMPONENTS OF A STORY

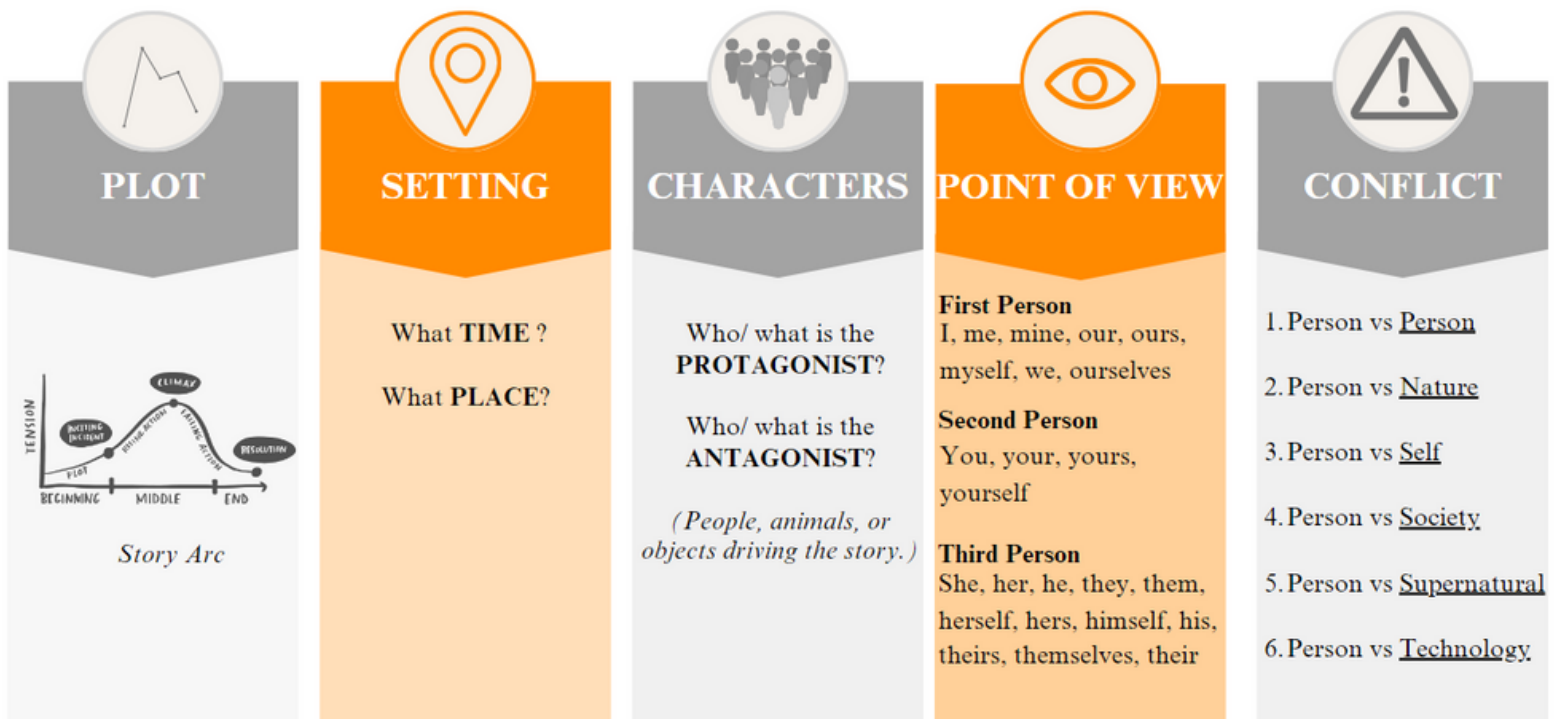


Figure 9: 5 key components of a story based on The 5 Key Elements of a Story Explained (2022)

We kept both the five key elements of a story and Levine’s components of success stories in mind when we interviewed young migrants to learn their stories.

Presenting Immigrant Success Stories

When constructing and presenting the accomplishments of immigrants for the purpose of inspiring others, it is important to frame their stories in a way that presents the significance of their challenges but also does not discourage them. It is also important not to oversimplify or provide a one-dimensional view of their experience. When reviewing stories of immigrants to Canada found in English as a Second Language (ESL) textbooks, Trevor Gulliver, an assistant professor at Bishop's University Sherbrooke, found that many of these stories “present Canada as a land of opportunity in which the hard-working almost invariably succeed” (2010). This presentation of Canada carries the implication that, if one doesn’t succeed, then it must be because they are not hard-working, or that they are lacking in qualities or character (Gulliver). These types of stories do provide a sense of empowerment and agency for the immigrants reading them by presenting hard work and determination as a way to overcome adversity in their new countries. However, as mentioned in Section 3, there are a lot of barriers for immigrants to overcome. It is not natural to overcome all of these barriers straight away; if the settlement process is portrayed as ‘easy’, immigrants may start to think worse of themselves if they don’t succeed quickly.

Another trend Gulliver noticed was that many stories of immigrant success presented Canada as a benevolent country and a “redeemer for newcomers,” while the immigrant’s country of origin was presented in a mostly negative light, focusing on what drove people out. This does provide a sense of security and peace of mind for immigrants now in Canada after a long and arduous immigration process. However, neither Canada, nor Australia, nor any country, is perfect when it comes to immigration barriers, racism, and other such issues. Presenting the immigrant’s new country as completely benevolent and infallible may make the inevitable obstacles more surprising and could make them blame themselves for things that are ultimately out of their control. Additionally, presenting immigrants’ countries of origin in a negative light could lead to issues with identity and trouble acculturating, as they may want to associate themselves less with their heritage as a result.

To avoid these shortcomings while presenting the stories of immigrants, Gulliver argues one should choose immigrants with a variety of different backgrounds and levels of adversity and success. It involves defining success not only in terms of individuals’ hard work and tenacity but also in terms of the quality of support they received and what they needed to overcome. It also involves a less one-dimensional representation of both immigrants’ new home countries and their countries of origin.

Examples of Immigrant Success Stories

Seeking to give new arrivals hope, the Australian Government has a number of migrant success stories on its immigration website. One such story comes in the form of a case study article describing the life of Khalid Amiri, an Afghan journalist forced to flee his home and career due to the return of the Taliban (Department of Home Affairs, 2023). The story begins by explaining how Khalid was very successful in Afghanistan, conducting high-profile interviews with the Prime Minister and other government officials. It narrates how he was forced to leave everything behind immediately and move to Australia, where he only knew about the Opera House and the men’s cricket team. It then transitions to where Khalid currently stands and how he got to that point. Something that makes this story effective is the extensive use of quotations that allow the reader to hear Khalid’s voice. The jump from where he was before to where he currently stands is an effective way of quickly grabbing the attention of the reader.

Another example of an effective story is a video of Sudanese refugee Nen John Phatlang (Department of Home Affairs, 2023). The video lets him tell his story to the camera, starting from how a civil war in Sudan forced him to migrate to Uganda, Kenya, and eventually Australia. Nen describes his struggles adjusting to Australia including the language barrier, but cites how his ethnic community was a great support to him in this difficult time. At this point in the video, there is a scene showing Nen speaking with a friend, and it's apparent that they can understand each other. To conclude, Nen shares how he has always wanted to be an engineer and has finally achieved his dream in Australia. Overall, this video provides an example of how narration by the central character can be one way to convey the story.

A final example, while not Australian, is a two-minute video telling the story of Bacilio Miguel, a sixteen year old who migrated to the U.S. from Guatemala (The Oregonian, 2019). This video employed a variety of tactics to enhance the story it told. It started off with footage of Bacilio riding his bike in his neighborhood while introducing himself through voice over. After this scene, the screen shifts to a black screen that says "Bacilio Miguel, 16, immigrated to the U.S. from Guatemala with his family in 2016." Then, the screen shifts back to B-roll of Bacilio walking around his neighborhood, and he begins reading an essay he wrote about his experience as a migrant. During the narration, some key phrases appear on the screen in text to add emphasis. At some point in the B-roll, Bacilio sits down at a table and starts sketching a flower, while he narrates how his family expected life in America to be beautiful. The video ends with Bacilio getting back on his bike and riding off into the distance, fading to a black screen that says that he will be entering his junior year of high school. Overall, these stylistic choices in the video greatly enhanced its effectiveness, so we will aim to adapt them in our media creation along with some other general strategies shown in Figure 10.

STORYTELLING TECHNIQUES IN MEDIA

ENHANCE THE CONTENT OF A STORY



Figure 10: Storytelling Techniques in Media

Effectiveness of Social Media

In order to reach the most youth and to do so effectively, it is essential that the delivery method we use be that which would resonate most with youth aged 15-25. A report conducted by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) in 2021, found that the overwhelming majority of young people use some sort of social media. Using one of the top networking sites (Figure 11) would also increase chances of reaching a wider audience of young people.

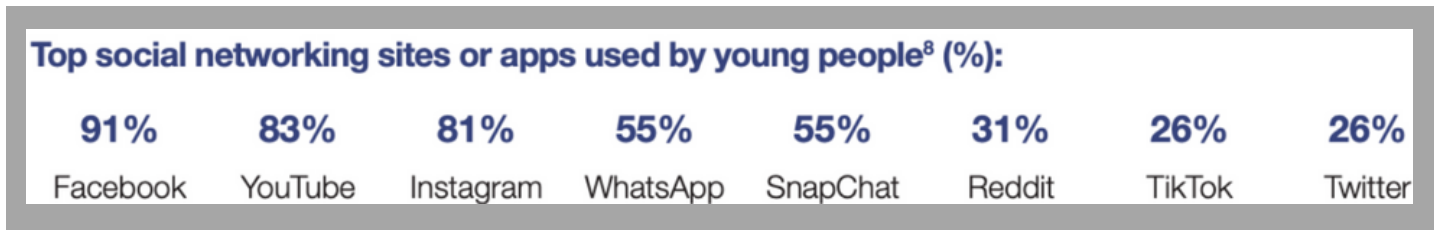


Figure 11: Top social networking sites or apps used by young people (%) (ACMA 2021)

The way in which social media is delivered is also key to the effectiveness of the media. All three of the top networking sites for young people - Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram - have a feature “reels” or “shorts” feature which are usually short videos less than a minute long. Social media experts have explained that these short videos are the most effective way to catch the audience’s attention (Savitri de Sousa, 2019). The limited amount of time in these quick, attention-grabbing videos requires the creator to think outside of the box and to produce something that captivates the audience quickly. Another key feature of these trending short videos is that they can be cost effective. Unlike more traditional media, which is created using professional photography and equipment, these videos are often created with simple phone cameras. While the product may seem less professional, this “down to earth” approach allows the viewer to feel as though they can relate to the media and connect better. At BSL, they have a regularly updated Instagram targeted towards reaching the youth. This includes bright, colorful flyers and short reels. The entire organization has a YouTube channel directed more towards sharing stories and accomplishments in a longer, more formal way. Using the BSL’s YouTube channel would also allow youth to refer back to the video after workshops and share with others who may not have attended.

Storyboarding

When creating media, storyboards provide a way to plan out and organize a sequence of events and key ideas. Storyboards consist of a sequence of panels (See figure 12) containing drawings and notes on the actions, graphics, and voiceovers/dialogue that happen in that given frame. They allow authors to organize their thoughts, share ideas, and identify problems early on in the process (Nashville Film Institute, n.d.). Importantly, storyboards give a list of things to film/create that can be used later on to guide the production of media and provide insight into what materials may be needed for certain shots. Thus, storyboards will be used in this project as a way to transform some of what we hear in interviews into a compelling narrative and plan out the structure and message of the media we create.

In the next chapter, we will discuss how we intend to approach the interview process, as well as the iterative design process we will employ throughout the production of our media.

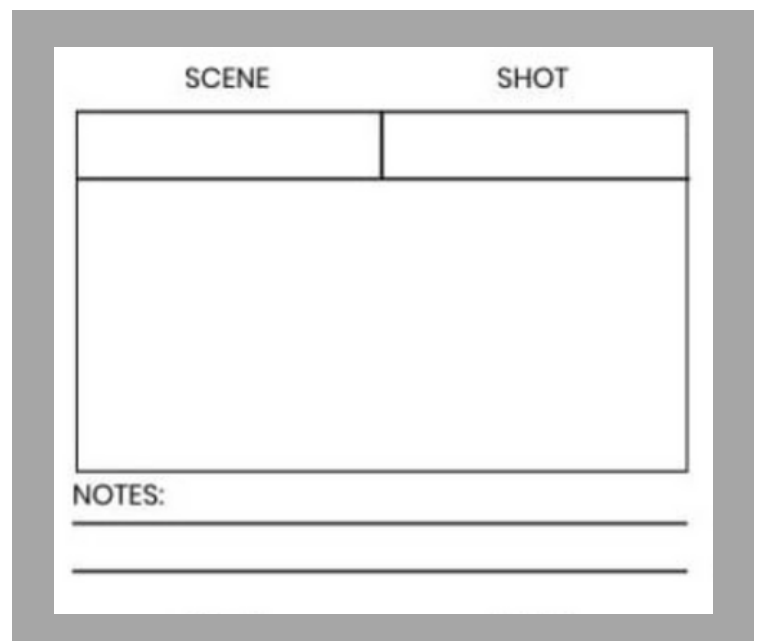


Figure 12: A blank storyboard template



METHODOLOGY

We will be working alongside YT coaches and participants to create media depicting stories of how young migrants in Australia have achieved success in order to inspire future participants and help them develop a growth mindset. Once this media is created, we will integrate those stories into the YT Program. This goal, our objectives and the associated methods are illustrated in Figure 13.

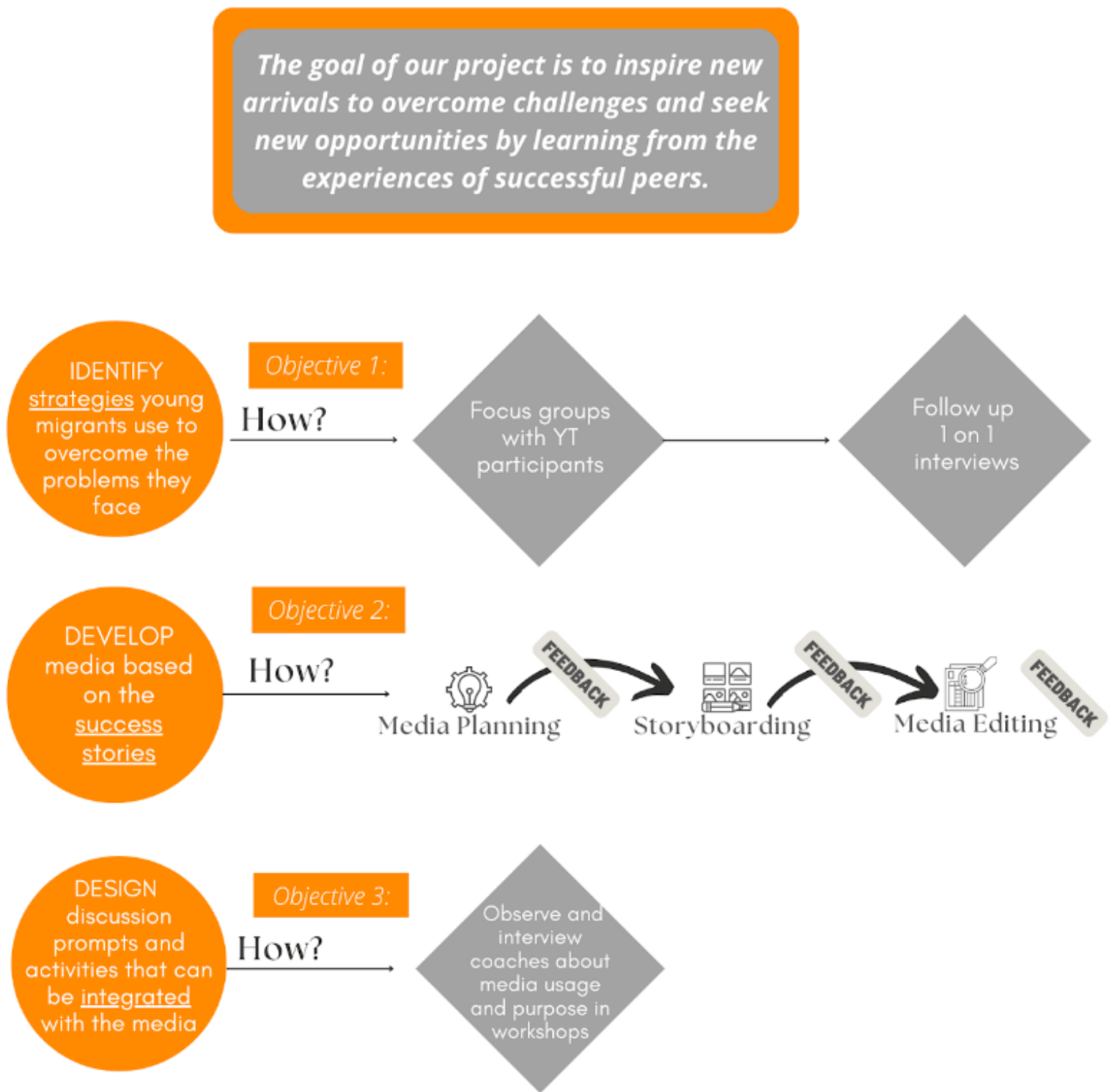


Figure 13: Methods used to achieve objective

Objective 1: Identify strategies and resources young migrants use to overcome the problems they face

To achieve this objective, our team first conducted a focus group with Youth Transitions participants and youth from partner organizations. We elected to conduct a focus group because the participants were used to group discussions in the BSL program, and we wanted to ensure that they would be comfortable. We chose a semi-structured style for our focus group questions because we wanted to elicit stories and ask follow-up questions to get details about what strategies the youth employed. The protocol for the focus group can be found in Supplemental Materials^A. We recruited our focus group participants based on convenience sampling, relying on referrals to youth from BSL and partner organizations. We asked the YT coaches to choose youth aged 18-25 who have had successful settlement experiences. Using our liaisons at BSL, we sent the youth an invite to participate through a flyer (see Figure 14) that contained a QR linking to a signup form. The form can be viewed in Supplemental Materials^B.



Figure 14: Focus Group Recruiting Flyer

Once participants signed up, we developed a series of questions to ask during the focus group which can be seen in Figure 15.

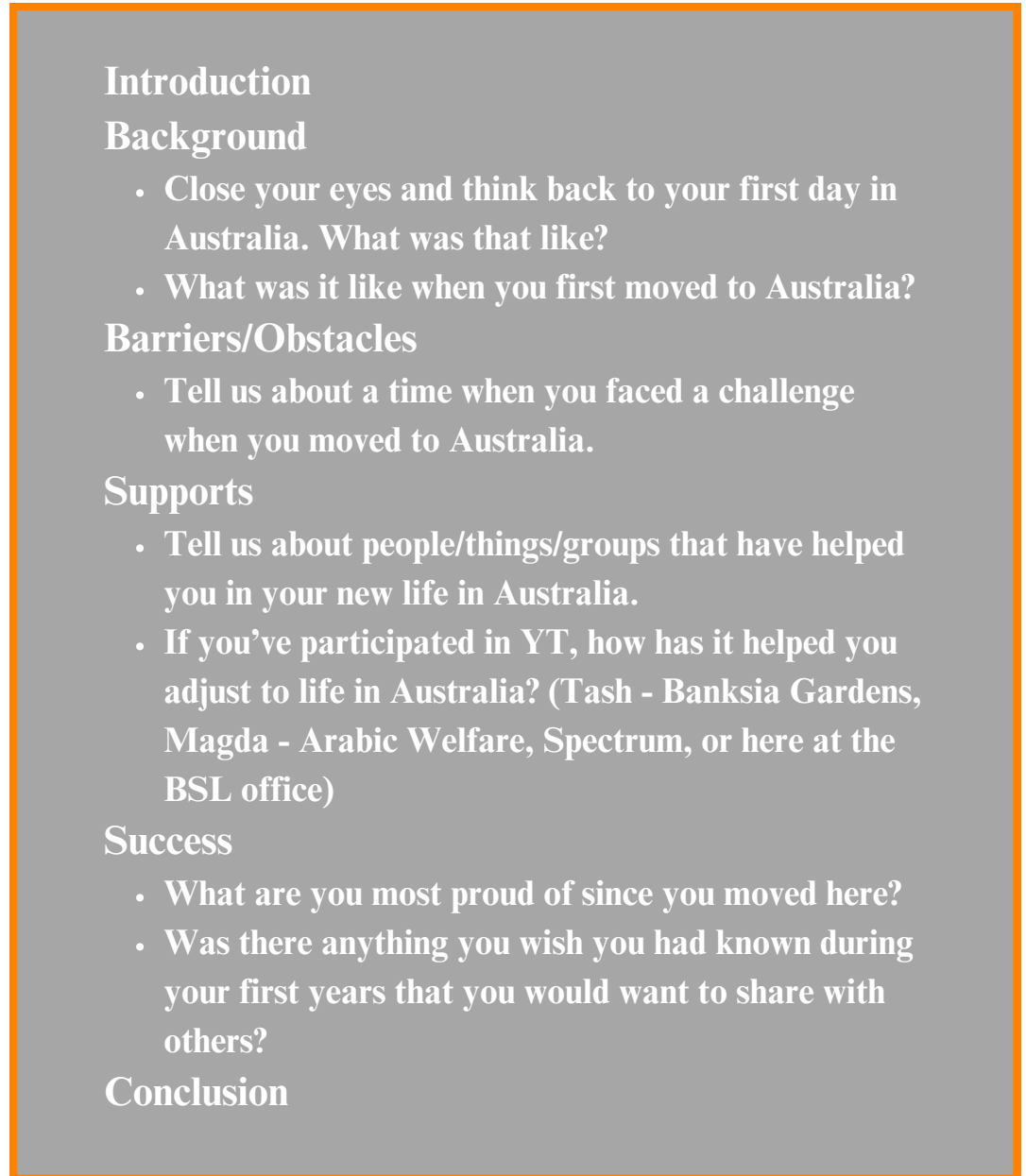


Figure 15: Focus Group Questions

Aside from learning participants' success strategies, another goal of the focus group was to assess whether the information they shared had the potential to create inspirational success stories (see Background Section 6 for what makes a good success story). We focused on how the youth were able to overcome the barriers they faced in hopes of telling inspiring, yet realistic stories. In the week following the focus group, we held four follow up interviews; three with young people who attended the focus group, and one with a participant who was recommended to us by BSL. The purpose of these follow ups was to ask more in depth questions related to what was discussed in the focus group. In addition, audio was recorded from the follow-ups using higher-end equipment to enhance the quality of the media we created. The consent forms can be found in Supplemental Materials^C.

Objective 2: Develop media based on the success stories

Since the media produced during this project would be used in Youth Transitions, it was important to get feedback on it from both coaches and program participants during each stage of development. We used iterative design, a methodology where a product is continually created, tested and improved based on user feedback (Interaction Design Foundation, 2023).

Iterative design involves four main stages: determining requirements, designing, testing, and evaluating in a repeated cycle as needed (see figure 16).

We implemented this process by meeting with Youth Transitions coaches, Youth Advisors, and/or current program members at each stage in the media's development.

The design stage of our process involved stages: pre-planning, storyboarding, media production, and editing. The objectives for each stage, along with what things we planned to have as deliverables to show during feedback meetings, are shown in Figure 17. The feedback from these meetings gave us a good idea of what changes to make before moving the media to the next stage of production.

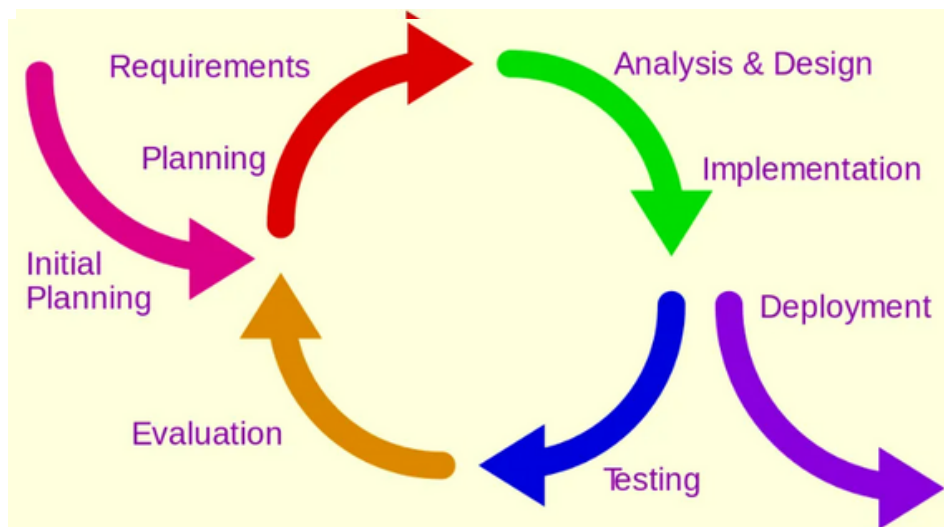


Figure 16: The iterative design process (from the Interaction Design Foundation)

Media design stages		
<p>Pre-planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide how to organize the stories Clarify purpose and message Decide on a medium Understand audience needs Make general script/plot outline with key events and conflicts <p>Deliverables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Page detailing medium, message, and presentation General plot outline & script List of imagery/quotes that could be used 	<p>Storyboarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan how to arrange the audio/visuals from one-on-ones Get list of visuals to collect or create Determine any extra voiceover that is needed <p>Deliverables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Storyboard Shotlist Script for any voiceover needed 	<p>Video editing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record additional voiceover as needed Collect additional visuals if needed Arrange audio and visuals collected Adapt video according to the lesson plan <p>Deliverables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalized media

Figure 17: the major stages in our media design process, along the deliverables we planned to show for each stage during feedback meetings



RESULTS & FINAL DELIVERABLES

We recruited five individuals from four different countries for our focus group. Most of the participants in the group shared their story comfortably, starting from what it was like when they first arrived in Australia to where they are now. Figure 18 summarizes the stories of these participants.

PERSON	AGE	COUNTRY OF EMIGRATION	KEY NOTES FROM THEIR STORIES
Young Person 1	20	Afghanistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knew zero English upon arrival • Was afraid of making mistakes • Learned by copying what people say • Starting speaking up and answering questions during English class • Is now proficient in English and was a speaker
Young Person 2	19	Iran	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family came by boat with nothing • Felt shame towards how she got to Australia • Attended a protest and shared her story, saw peoples' reactions and realized why can't I be proud • Is now a public speaker
Young Person 3	24	Turkey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggled to find community • Didn't know any English, felt lonely • Started to pursue his hobby as a photographer, with help from BSL was able to turn it into full time job • Watched a youth receive Citizen of the Year Award, got inspired and worked towards achieving the same
Young Person 4	21	Afghanistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggled to get a job upon arrival • Felt isolated and alone • Found an internship that BSL helped her apply to • Confidence increases as she gains experience • Is a student at RMIT and full time employee now
Young Person 5	23	Syria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was afraid to speak up upon arrival • Didn't have any documents, and parents didn't know any English • Started pushing herself out of her comfort zone and asking for help • Is now a confident English speaker and is working giving back to the community

Figure 18: Focus Group Participant Profiles Chart

After the focus group, we listened to the recording and analyzed common obstacles each participant faced and strategies they employed to overcome them. These barriers and strategies are summarized in Figure 19.

Key Obstacles		Key Strategies
1. Arrival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No visas or documentation • No resources – both material & informational • No support networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting with support organizations • Relying on community – both ethnic & diverse
2. Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture shock • Language • Lack of community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting with people from other backgrounds • Using English in public – both listening & speaking
3. Structural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No local experience – hard to find jobs • Hard to adjust to school • Hard to access services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolling in programs at support organizations • Asking teachers for help
4. Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shame about refugee background • Lack of confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing story with others • Stepping outside comfort zone

Figure 19: Obstacles Faced and Strategies Youth Employed

The obstacles and supports mentioned in the Focus Group largely corresponded to the ones mentioned in Background Sections 3 and 4. We noticed that finding one’s identity was especially significant, as it made the difference between remaining paralyzed by culture shock as discussed in Background Section 3 and starting the journey towards success. For example, one young person struggled with feeling shame about her arrival story. When asked about what helped her overcome this shame, she relayed, “Really what helped was finding myself and who I am and being proud of that, that I am indeed an asylum seeker, that I am a refugee and I’m proud of my background.” Though it took a lot of time, self reflection, and personal growth, over time she was eventually able to let go of the feeling of guilt, and start using her story to inspire others, explaining that they should be proud of where they came from and how far they have come. Another young person had to push himself out of his comfort zone in his English class by sitting in the front and not being afraid to answer the teacher’s questions; even if he made mistakes, he still learned. He had to be persistent and suffer through making many mistakes, which takes a lot of courage. Though this experience was uncomfortable for him, it allowed him to learn the language faster and become more confident. These examples demonstrate that having a positive outlook on the challenges faced, and not being afraid to make mistakes seems to be the key to overcoming them, which is also the idea of a “growth mindset” highlighted in Phase 1 of the YT program. By focusing on how each participant relied on their strengths to handle obstacles, we aimed to relay that mindset is something anyone can change regardless of external circumstances, and it is thus crucial to success in starting a new life.

Following our proposed methodology, we conducted one-on-one interviews or conversations with participants from the focus group who were willing to share further and an additional person who did not participate in the group. The protocol can be viewed in Supplemental Materials^D. We used our notes

from the focus groups to help guide these conversations and remind us of events we wanted them to describe in more detail, while also giving the interviewees the space to share whatever they felt was important for other migrants to know. The familiarity from previous discussions in the focus group conversations facilitated more natural storytelling that we were then able to use as audio clips in the media.

Initially, we aimed to include all 4 of the stories from the one-on-one interviews in a composite story format, where multiple people’s narratives were interwoven into one video. The feedback we received on this was that it was too long and that viewers might lose track of who was who and what their storylines were. Thus, we narrowed it down to two of the participants who we identified as having the most inspiring stories, best delivery, and used the strongest imagery that enhanced connecting with the stories. We analyzed the transcripts of the conversations and selected pieces that related to the five parts of a narrative (see Background Section 6). We then created narrative arcs from each story as shown in Figure 20. Finally, we arranged the narratives into a script, which facilitated a coherent story. The script can be viewed in Supplemental Materials^E.

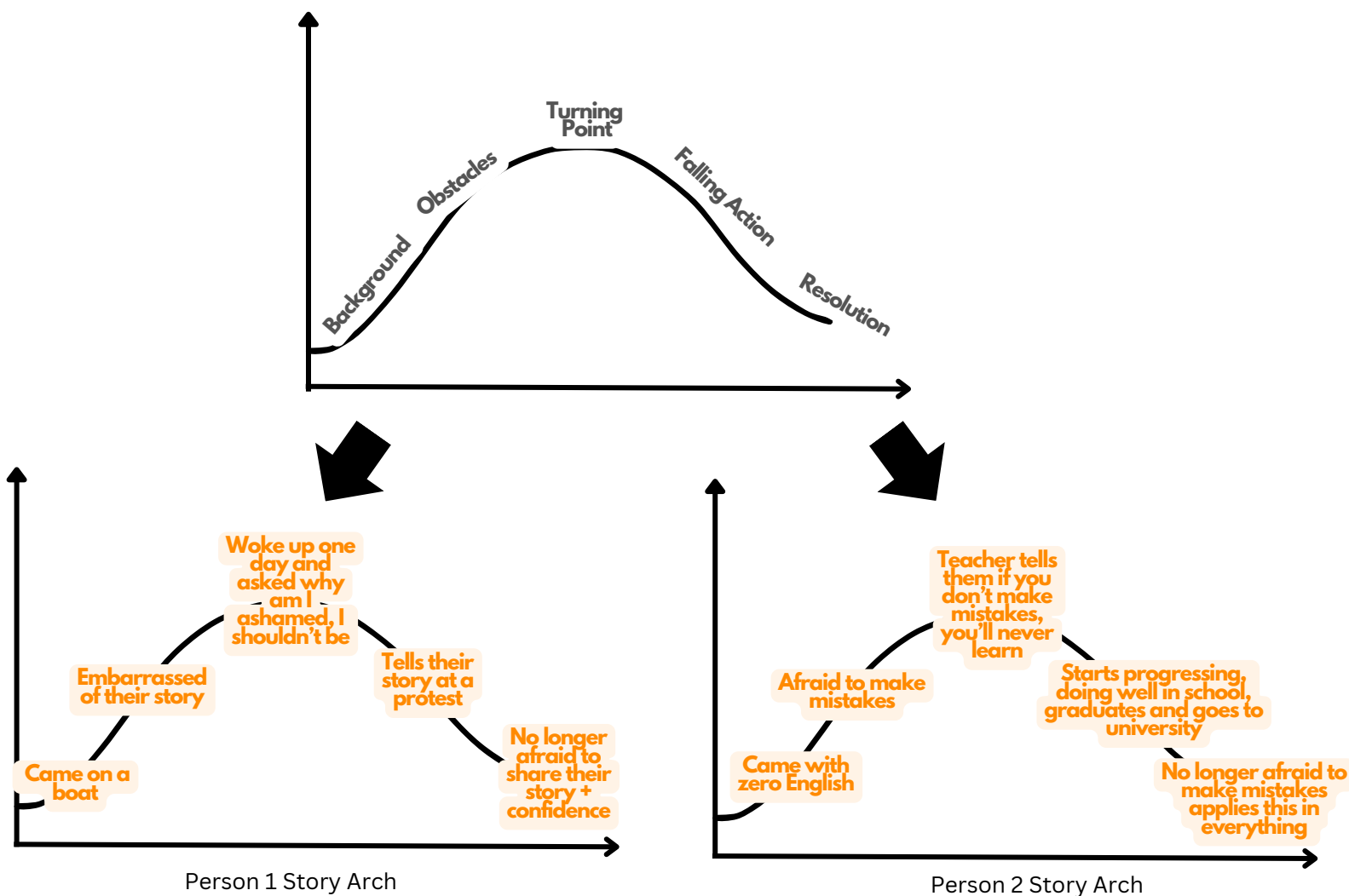


Figure 20: Story Arch based off of the key components of a story

After receiving multiple rounds of feedback on the script, we created a storyboard that mapped images to the parts of the story (see figure 21).

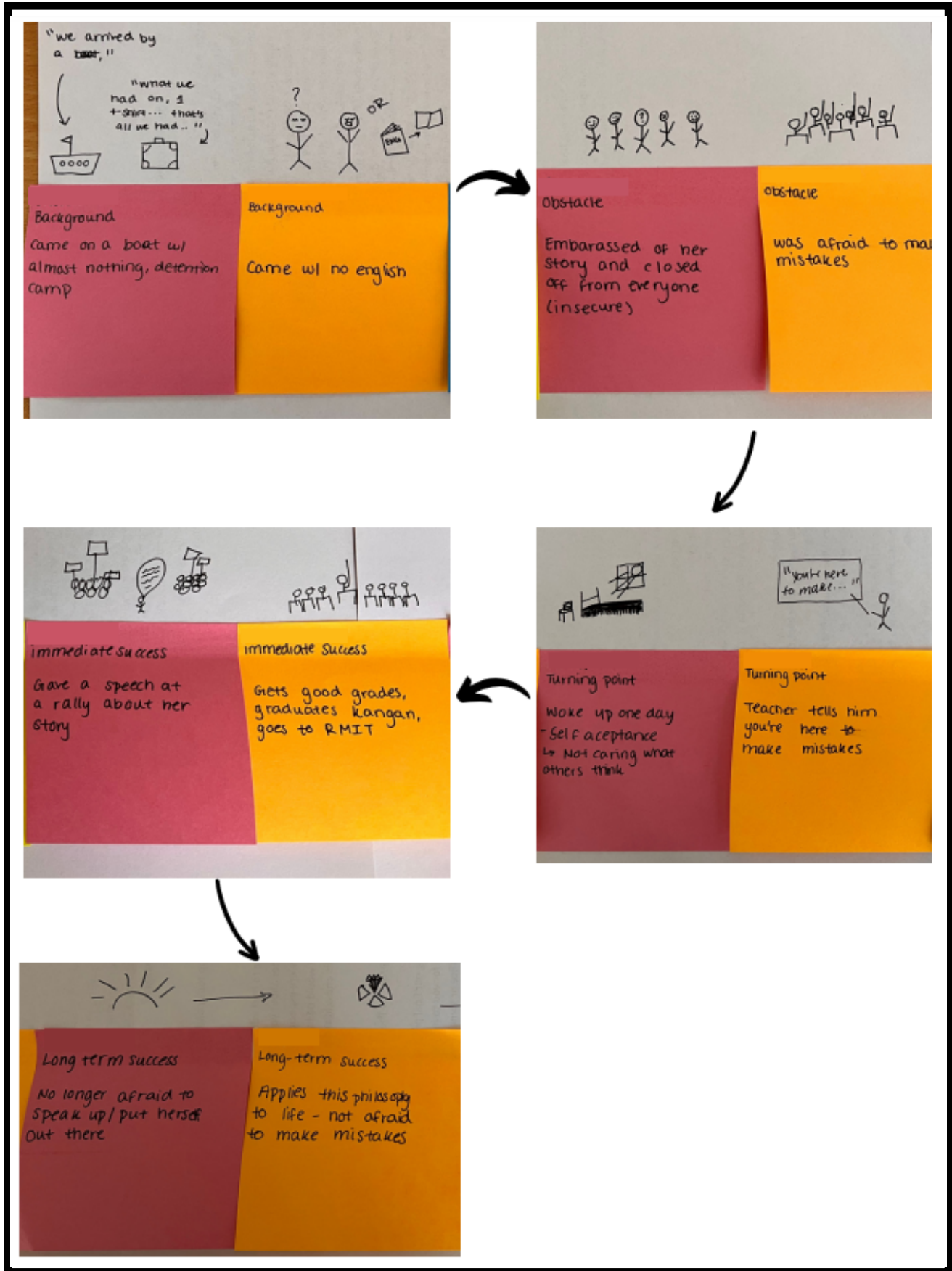


Figure 21: Storyboard

After honing down our script to two stories, we began brainstorming on how to create effective visuals. Our initial idea was to use stock and b-roll videos, as it allowed us to keep the youth we interviewed anonymous while still providing accurate imagery. However, we abandoned this idea because it seemed to detract from the audio due to its complexity and felt detached from the very personal stories we were telling. Instead, we chose to use a hand-drawn, paper cutout-style video with stick figures, as it allowed for custom visuals that supported and reaffirmed what the quotes in the audio said. This idea also ensured that all participants would remain anonymous and that the visuals would be relatable for a diverse audience due to their generality. By simplifying the visuals and deciding to use quotes from fewer participants, we found that the story generally flowed well. To ease the transitions between themes, we decided to include a narrator that added brief context and highlighted key messages the audience should take away. See Figure 22 for examples of what the visuals in the video look like. The full video can be viewed on the Digital WPI website¹.




Figure 22: Screenshots from the video produced

To fulfill Objective 3, we created an activity guide. This guide provides follow up activities to go along with the video by encouraging reflection and inspiring further discussion. It is designed to be used by the coaches in a workshop after the video is shown. The guide consists of lesson plans with desired learning outcomes and procedures for the activities. Based on existing activities in the Youth Development Coaches Toolbox in the YT Practice Guide (Buick et al., 2023), we developed three activities that can be conducted after the video is played. Each of the activities is designed to have the participants reflect on the video, continue the discussion, and set goals for themselves. The first activity is an engaging way to have the audience brainstorm how they can apply a growth mindset in their own lives. The premise of the activity is the participants form a circle and toss around a balloon that contains questions relating to the themes in the video, answering the question their finger lands on. The second activity is a fixed vs. growth mindset worksheet that reinforces what a growth mindset entails. The sheet

¹To access the digital WPI website, type <https://digitalwpi.wpi.edu> into your search browser. In the search bar, type Boundless Dreams Down Under - Inspiring Young Migrants and Refugees in Hume, Australia. Under "Items" select WPI x BSL Final Video to view the video.

contains statements written using a fixed mindset, and the youth must write a corresponding statement using a growth mindset. The final activity is a drawing timeline sheet where the youth tell their own stories by creating similar drawings to the ones in the video. This activity aims to encourage the youth to evaluate how far they have come and what they still want to achieve in the future. Figure 23 shows examples of all three activities described, and the full Activity Guide can be found in Supplemental Materials^F.



I don't like to be challenged.
TO
Challenges help me grow.

1. What was it like when you first came to Australia?
2. Is there something you related to in the video?
3. What is a goal you have?

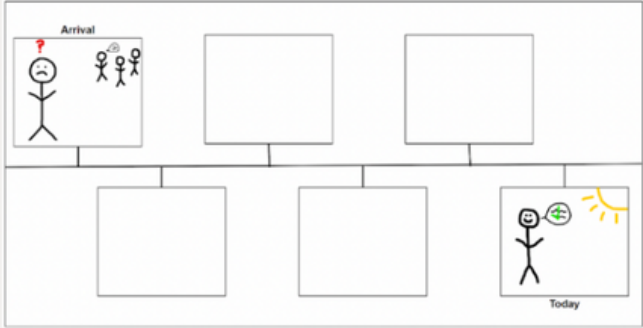


Figure 23: Post Workshop Activities





CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

This project was done with the goal of creating a piece of media that could be used to inspire new arrivals to overcome challenges and seek new opportunities by learning from the experiences of successful peers. Over the course of our first eight weeks, we worked from Worcester, Massachusetts, where we researched what the immigration process to Australia is like, the context of the Hume area, obstacles migrants commonly face, resources and strategies they draw upon, the existing structure of the Youth Transitions program, and how stories can be used to inspire through different mediums. With this context in mind, we spent an additional eight weeks working in Hume, Australia at the Brotherhood of St. Laurence. During this time we worked very closely with BSL staff and YT coaches and advisors. We used this time to get to know the organization, the people that make it all work, and the youth they help. The time we spent in Hume allowed us to better understand the audience we had and the demographics of the area. We attended workshops and events and even played basketball and did some pottery painting with newly arrived young people, which also helped us to get to know them better. Our immersion allowed us to see how the youth lived in their community and the support they needed. We also noticed how closely knit the community was and the strength of the network of organizations working together to aid those in need. To learn more about people who had gone through YT, we held a focus group and follow-up interviews. We were able to hear many inspiring stories of young people that we used to develop our final video. These stories were extremely meaningful, inspirational, and showed us a number of strategies and resources these youth turned to when in the face of adversity. While we wanted to include all the stories in our video, we realized that we could only include the key parts of some of the stories in order to keep it clear and easy to follow. To make the media, we created a video using stick figures with non-identifying features, direct quotes from youth participants, and additional lines of narration to highlight key messages. We collected feedback throughout our process as we went from advisors and BSL staff, to create the best video, activities, and guide possible. The activities we created were inspired from activities that we participated in or observed during our time at the BSL office or workshops that we attended.

Phase 1 of the YT program aims to inspire the youth to begin setting goals and encourages self exploration. The intended use of the video is that it be shown in a Phase 1 workshop of the YT program, as it will provide inspiration for the young people early on in their journeys. The accompanying activities to the video should also be used alongside the video right after it is played during a workshop. YT coaches can choose from any one of the three activities we created depending on the preference of the coach, based on what they see fitting for the group they have. The goal with these activities is to encourage a discussion about the video and reinforce the concept of building a growth mindset and reflecting on one's experiences, strengths, and goals.



Our project is intended to be the start of a larger ongoing effort to integrate custom-made media into the Youth Transitions program. As such, we also have a few recommendations for how to continue with this effort. These recommendations could be carried out by either Youth Transitions staff (such as Youth Advisors) or future WPI teams. Our first recommendation is to put the video on BSL's YouTube channel, which we found to be the most convenient platform for them. Using YouTube will allow us to make the video accessible to the youth too in case they choose to rewatch it on their own. This may even result in them sharing it with others, which would allow for the video to potentially reach an even greater audience. In a similar vein, an additional recommendation we have is to turn the video we created for this project into short-form content that could be posted on platforms such as Instagram Reels or TikTok. Since these platforms are frequented by youth (see Background Section 6.3), this would give the media a chance to circulate more among YT's target demographic, which would spread both awareness of YT's mission and the message of the media itself to a larger number of people.

Another recommendation we have is to find a way to either informally or formally measure the impact that the media and activities developed during this project have in the Youth Transitions program. This may involve gauging youth responsiveness to the video and activities during phase 1 of YT, or using metrics such as YouTube views and comments to determine the wider demands for this type of content. Additionally, if the media proves to be an effective tool for Youth Transitions, then it may be useful to create more media to use at different points (such as Phases 2-4 of YT) or for different purposes (such as advocacy to Parliament). These pieces of media would likely be different from the media produced for this project; however, the theme of young people sharing their stories and experiences should stay the same. For instance, a piece of media developed for a workshop on getting a driver's license could have a young person or several young people explain how that process was for them. Showing this to current participants may relieve their concerns or give them a more realistic idea of what to expect for that workshop. A video used more for advocacy or publicity may detail more of an individual's experiences with the Youth Transitions program and how it helped them get where they are today.

We hope that the video and activities created over the course of this project term are able to leave a lasting, sustainable impact on the Youth Transitions program. We also hope that they inspire future endeavors to create motivational content for use in Youth Transitions workshops and other BSL programs.



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