



Learning to See Differently

Supporting Refugee-Background
Students at Victoria University of
Wellington, Aotearoa/New Zealand

Written by Monica Evans, Caroline Cowie and Thomas Vink *with contributions from* Osman Osman, Dennis Maang, Kuo Jia, Kim Seok, Terefe Ejigu, Mustafa Sheikh, Anna Ravendran, Sarah Gray, Mariska Kecskemeti and Sadiya Jimale. *Also with* Sara Kindon.

Photo One (On front cover): (from left to right) Back row: Yusuf, Fatah, Keynes, Tom, Shayne, Mariska, Sara, Dennis, Abdi, Yasin, Digaga; Middle Row: Fuad, Tinza, Teresa, Sarah, Diane, Caroline, Kuo, Liban, Ummy; Front Row: Siry, Monica, Terefe, Koos, Sabrina at the end of year GR party, 15 October 2008.

Letter of Transmittal

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Dear Pat,

We are pleased to present you with our report '*Learning to See Differently: supporting refugee background students at Victoria University of Wellington*'. This report is a product of our, and others', participation in and reflections on the establishment and maintenance of the student-run club, Global Remix, at Victoria University of Wellington this year. With this report, we aim to assist a range of different parties, by providing information about refugee-background students at Victoria and recommendations for how these parties can work to serve these students more effectively. We expect that readers will gain a picture of refugee-background students at Victoria that shakes up stereotypes, and will acquire an understanding of not only the challenges faced by refugee-background students, but also their strengths and resilience. In addition, this report will provide practical advice to guide Global Remix in the future and to set an example for students at other universities who may wish to establish a similar group.

This report consists of an introduction, background, approach and methods section, thematic findings, members' stories, discussion, recommendations and appendices.

Our work with Global Remix has brought to light the importance of working *with*, rather than for, refugee-background students at Victoria. Throughout our research, refugee-background students have consistently demonstrated that they are not people who

simply need to be supported, but are in fact able to make meaningful contributions to the club, club members and the wider university. As summed up by Global Remix member Osman Osman, **“I think Global Remix is the place to be if you are seriously wanting to make a better future as it is ran by students themselves and they are the ones who care most about their own future”**

We wish to give our warm thanks for your support which has enabled us to complete this work. Without your generous assistance, this work might not have been possible. If you have any questions or comments regarding the interpretation of this report, please do not hesitate to contact us at the address above.

Yours sincerely,

Caroline Cowie

Thomas Vink

Monica Evans



Abbreviations

AGM: Annual General Meeting

EPP: English Proficiency Programme (VUW)

FS: Foundation Studies (VUW)

GEOG 404: Geography 404: Young People and Participatory Development

GR: Global Remix

IGM: Inaugural General Meeting

PAR: Participatory Action Research

PD: Participatory Development

RB: Refugee-Background

SLS: Student Learning Support services (VUW)

VUW: Victoria University of Wellington

VUWSA: Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association

Executive Summary

Introduction

This report is a summary of learnings from involvement in the student-run club Global Remix (GR) at Victoria University of Wellington (VUW) this year. It is written by students from *Geography 404: Young People and Participatory Development* (GEOG 404) and other members of GR. It aims to shake up stereotypes about refugee-background (RB) students, and show not only the challenges they face, but also their strengths and resilience.

It builds on research carried out in 2006 by another GEOG 404 research team¹, which looked at how RB students could be better supported at VUW. One of the recommendations of this report was that a mentoring programme for RB students be established. So, at first, our research aimed to contribute to the development of this programme.

At our first student-led meeting with RB students, people also suggested setting up a club, and we agreed to help get one up and running. As the year progressed, we realised that collective, informal mentoring through the club was working for people and a more formal, one-on-one programme was not actually appropriate at this stage.

¹ Horner, Cedric. Shana Khan & Kathryn Paton. with Awad Hagos and Sara Kindon (2006) *Victoria University of Wellington: supporting refugee background students to achieve their goals*. Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington

What is Global Remix?

In the first 'club' meeting on the 2nd May 2008 members came up with the name 'Global Remix'. The club is building its own impetus and identity and becoming established in the university, with new members joining throughout the year. GR represents 17 different nationalities amongst its 49 members, with study areas as diverse as E-commerce, Bio-med and International Relations. Members have organised a number of social events and held several academic workshops. Through these, they have learnt new skills and had the chance to meet friendly faces from different organisations. Most importantly, the club has become a space where many people feel comfortable asking each other for help with studies and other aspects of university life.

The experience of being involved in GR has, rather organically, *become* the GEOG 404 team's 'research'. This lived experience has provided our team with understandings that are much more significant than anything we gained through asking people abstractly about what a good mentor might be. From this, we can say with confidence, 'this is what people use', and not simply 'this is what people imagine they might use.' Through the extensive support, enthusiasm and participation of GR's members, we are proud to say that the club has become a space where its members have begun **"Learning to see differently."**²

Themes

A number of key themes have emerged as a result of our team's experiences with GR this year:

² Hughes, Gabriel, Pers. comm, 24/09/2008.

- ***Identity***

Most RB students feel that being identified as refugees frames them as victims. RB students have a broad range of identities, and we can never hope to draw an accurate picture of all of their needs. But, by creating an open, accepting and supportive space, we can help people's individual needs to be met.

- ***Support Services***

The RB students we have worked with tend to have little knowledge about, or faith in, services that can assist them. Many think that institutions lack understanding about what students truly need. Having a personal connection to support services is extremely important for many members of GR.

- ***'Good Intentions'***

As word about GR has spread, the group has been approached by a range of people looking to interview members or involve them in projects. It is important to remember that these 'good intentions' do not always translate into benefits for the people being researched.

- ***Isolating University Culture***

The individualistic university environment can create feelings of isolation, confusion and loneliness. Overall, there is a lack of easily accessible information for new students that makes clear that it is normal to feel confused or unsure, and that there are many avenues to access help and support.

- ***Need for Connectedness***

For many new students to Victoria, the challenges created by the isolating university culture intensify the natural desire for a sense of belonging, involvement and connectedness.

- ***Club Ethic – Diversity***

The multicultural, inclusive nature of GR is a big source of pride for the group. This is a positive way to attract RB and other students and much more effective than focussing on 'refugee-hood' and its associated 'problems'.

- ***Club Ethic – Equity***

Ensuring equity in all club processes and functions is very important to many members of GR. While bureaucratic club procedures may be quicker to fulfil in an informal fashion, taking extra time to ensure equity and due process is important to many members.

- ***Being Believed In, Giving Back***

It seems that many staff and students do not genuinely believe that RB students are able to achieve good academic results. GR aims to build belief amongst students by providing realistic role models and encouraging students to help one another so that *everybody* is giving *and* getting something back.

Discussion/Conclusion

In this section, links are made between the report's findings and wider literature. However, it is concluded that this research stands apart from much of the literature on RB people because of its strengths-based, action-oriented approach, from which broader lessons on social research can be learned.

Recommendations

As a way of addressing some of the issues that are represented by these themes, this report gives a number of recommendations for individuals and organisations involved

with RB students at VUW. Taking a personal interest in RB students, believing in them and their capabilities, and advocating for them among other staff and students, are key features of these. More concretely, it is recommended that a designated study space be provided for RB students on campus.

Looking Forward

Lastly, tips are provided for current and future members of GR at VUW to help the club maintain momentum into the future; and for students at other universities aiming to set up and run a club similar to GR.



Photo Two: (from left to right) Kuo, Ummu, Terefe, Sara and Dennis dancing at the end of year GR party, 15 October, 2008.

Acknowledgements

This project has been an absolutely invaluable experience for us (Caroline, Tom and Monica). We would like to acknowledge all of those who helped make this project possible and gave a hand along the way.

First, we wish to extend our warm thanks to Sara Kindon, for your unwavering faith in us and continued guidance and support. Secondly, to the Staff Network, for helping to get this rolling, and for being ok about the unexpected turns this project has taken – we hope! Thirdly to the Vice-Chancellor, Pat Walsh – your generous support has been invaluable and is making a huge difference. To our 404 classmates, Ella, Jamie, Kendyll, Jen and Sarah, for being there to talk things over. To VUWSA, for being interested in GR and only as bureaucratic as necessary. To Gabby at the Mount Street Bar, for always lending us glasses and water for meetings. To Changemakers Refugee Forum, for recommending the always-delicious catering. To the people who shared the Deve study room and had to put up with all our distractions as we wrote this report. To SLS, for being lovely and lending us your space. To Mary Roberts from SLS and Millie Douglas from Career Services, for volunteering your time to run valuable workshops at GR meetings. To James Maxwell and Studylink, for showing an interest in being involved in the group and getting to know students personally. To EPP, SLS and FS, the relationships that your staff have built with many GR members have helped students to feel connected and on-track at VUW. To Jacinta at the Boys and Girls Institute, for some wise words. To friends, flatmates and whanau, for being there. Lastly and most importantly, we would like to show our deep gratitude to all members of GR - in particular, the people who have consistently come to meetings and contributed to the club, and to this report. Thank you for letting us learn with you, and coming with us on this '*loverly*' and unforgettable journey.

Table of Contents

Abbreviations	5
Executive Summary	6
Acknowledgements	11
Table of Contents	12
Table of Photos	14
Index of Tables and Charts.....	16
Introduction	17
Background	19
Approach and Methods of the GEOG 404 Team.....	24
Painting a Picture: What is Global Remix?.....	34
Themes	44
Identity.....	44
Negotiating Support Services	46
‘Good Intentions’	49
Isolating University Culture.....	51
Need for Connectedness.....	53
Club Ethic – Celebration of Diversity	55
Club Ethic – Equity	57
Being Believed In, Giving Back.....	58
Stories: Members’ Experiences in Global Remix.....	60
Osman Osman.....	61
Dennis Maang.....	62
Kuo Jia.....	63

Kim Seok.....	64
Terefe Ejigu.....	65
Mustafa Sheikh.....	66
Anna Ravendran.....	67
Sarah Gray.....	67
Mariska Kecskemeti.....	68
Sadiya Jimale.....	69
Discussion and Conclusion.....	70
Recommendations	76
Looking Forward.....	78
Suggestions for students at other universities aiming to set up and run a club similar to Global Remix	83
Appendices.....	87
Appendix One: Body maps drawn by GR members in a meeting on the 8th May 2008	88
Appendix Two: Additional Data.....	92
Appendix Three: Timeline of GR Activities 2008	95
Appendix Four: Article for Ministry of Youth Development Magazine '12-24'	97
Appendix Five: List of Useful Contact Details for all students.....	99
Reference List.....	112

Table of Photos

Photo One: (from left to right) Back row: Yusuf, Fatah, Keynes, Tom, Shayne, Mariska, Sara, Dennis, Abdi, Yasin, Digaga; Middle Row: Fuad, Tinza, Teresa, Sarah, Diane, Caroline, Kuo, Liban, Ummy; Front Row: Siry, Monica, Terefe, Koos, Sabrina at the end of year GR party, 15 October 2008.....	Cover Page
Photo Two: (from left to right) Kuo, Ummy, Terefe, Sara and Dennis at the end of year GR party, 15 th October 2008.....	10
Photo Three: (from left to right) Caroline, Tom, Siry, Monica, Kuo and Liban at the end of year GR party, 15 th October 2008.....	18
Photo Four: (From left to right) Rahma, Ridwan, Caroline, Ummy, Dennis, Fuad, Terefe, Ella, Tinza, Taw Reh and Monica at a GR meeting, 2 nd May 2008.....	23
Photo Five: Mustafa and Kim at a GR meeting, 24 th July 2008.....	27
Photo Six: Siry at a GR meeting, 8 th May 2008.....	30
Photo Seven: (from left to right) Terefe, Monica, Tom, Kim and Will writing greetings in different languages, 24 th July 2008.....	33
Photo Eight: (from left to right) Ella, Monica, Ummy, Terefe, Taw Reh, Tinza, Dennis, Fuad, Ridwan, Caroline and Rahma playing an icebreaker game at a GR meeting, 2 nd May 2008.....	36
Photo Nine: (from left to right) Fuad, Monica, Caroline, Mustafa aka Weird Stranger and Tom at Titahi Bay, 24 th June 2008.....	39
Photo Ten: Siry and Kuo at the end of year GR party, 15 th October 2008.....	46
Photo Eleven: Kuo and Jodie at the end of year GR party, 15 th October 2008.....	49
Photo Twelve: Caroline, Monica and Tom at a meeting, 19 th April 2008.....	50
Photo Thirteen: (from left to right) Fuad, Mustafa, Tom, Monica and Siry on Clubs day, 2 nd July 2008.....	52

Photo Fourteen: (from left to right) Tom, Fuad, Rahma and Ella at the GR food stall, 12 th August 2008.....	53
Photo Fifteen: Greetings in different languages written by GR members 2008.....	55
Photo Sixteen: Decorations made by members at the end of year GR party, 15 th October 2008.....	57
Photo Seventeen: Tom, Siry, Dennis and Monica at the end of year GR party, 15 th October 2008.....	58
Photo Eighteen: Dennis and Terefe at a GR meeting, 8 th May 2008.....	60
Photo Nineteen: Fuad, Tom and Kuo at the end of year GR party, 15 th October.....	75
Photo Twenty: Caroline, Monica, Dennis and Tom's feet, GR bowling trip, 24 June.....	75
Photo Twenty One: (from left to right) Back Row: Shayne, Tom, Keynes, Mariska, Sara, Dennis, Kuo, Abdi, Yasin, Dagaga; Middle Row: Fuad, Yusuf, Teresa, Sarah, Mariska, Diane, Ummy, Liban; Front Row: Siry, Monica, Terefe, Caroline, Koos, Sabrina at the end of year GR party, 15 th October 2008.....	78
Photo Twenty Two: (from left to right) Terefe, Monica, Fuad, Caroline and Tom at the end of year GR party, 15 th October 2008.....	82
Photo Twenty Three: Mustafa, Caroline, Tom, Siry and Monica at the end of year GR party, 15 th October 2008.....	86

Index of Tables and Charts

Tables:

Table One: Recommendations from the 2006 report most relevant to our research.....	22
Table Two: Geography 404 Code of Ethics, 2008.....	31
Table Three: What Should We Call Our Club?.....	35
Table Four: Global Remix Goals.....	43

Charts:

Chart One: Nationalities of GR Members.....	37
Chart Two: How Long GR Members Have Been In New Zealand.....	40
Chart Three: GR- Areas of Study.....	41
Chart Four: Ages of GR Members.....	92
Chart Five: Where GR Members go for Study Help.....	93
Chart Six: Who Makes GR Members Feel 'At Home' at University.....	94

Introduction

Learning to See Differently: supporting refugee background students at Victoria University of Wellington (VUW) is a product of our (the GEOG 404 team) and others' participation in, and reflection on, the establishment and maintenance of the student-run club Global Remix at VUW. Our work was informed by the recommendations of *Victoria University of Wellington: supporting refugee background students to achieve their goals*³, a research project undertaken at VUW in 2006. *Learning to See Differently* aims to assist a range of different parties, by providing information about Refugee-Background (RB) students at VUW and recommendations for how these parties can work to serve these students more effectively. In addition, this report provides practical advice to guide GR in the future, and inspire students at other universities who may wish to establish a similar group.

As students of GEOG 404, coordinated by Sara Kindon at the School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences, we (Thomas Vink, Caroline Cowie and Monica Evans) were given the opportunity to work with RB, international and other students at VUW. We wrote the 'Introduction', 'Background', 'Approaches and Methods', 'Themes', 'Discussion', 'and 'Recommendations' for this report, while the 'Stories' section was written by other members of GR. GEOG 404 has informed our work by coaching us in the use of Participatory Action Research (PAR) and a Participatory Development (PD) approach, and supporting our work in applying this approach in the context of GR.

This work was commissioned by the Vice Chancellor, Pat Walsh, and supported by the VUW Staff Network to Support Refugee-Background Students. It was guided by the network's vision that, through work such as this, "Refugee-background (RB) students at VUW achieve academically at the same rate as the general student population in an

³ Horner et al (2006).

inclusive and responsive university environment, which provides targeted services and support.”⁴

As a significant step away from conventional approaches to ‘dealing with’ issues faced by RB students, we have chosen to walk alongside students and have faith in their capabilities. Our PAR is noteworthy, as we have helped to establish the first New Zealand university club which provides social and academic support for RB students, in a positive, strength-based way. Through the extensive support, enthusiasm and participation of GR’s members, we are proud to say that the club has become a space where members are **“learning to see differently.”**⁵



Photo Three: (from left to right) Caroline, Tom, Siry, Monica, Kuo and Liban at the end of year GR party, 15 October 2008.

⁴ Kindon, Sara. (2007) Application to the Vice Chancellor’s Contingency Fund, Victoria University of Wellington. Wellington. p. 2.

⁵ Hughes, Gabriel. Pers comm. 24/09/2008.

Background

There is scant literature on the situations of Refugee Background (RB) university students, in New Zealand and around the world. Here, we (the GEOG 404 team) attempt to give a broad overview of common issues for RB people from the publications available. However, it is important to remember that any attempt at ‘painting a picture’ of RB people can create problematic pre-conceptions. For example, our own research on RB youth prior to this project imbued us with similar pre-conceptions that informed our early interactions with RB students at Victoria. Once we began building relationships with RB students, we quickly realised how limiting these pre-conceptions were.

This year, the GEOG 404 team has worked with RB students from Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Eritrea, the Congo, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, Myanmar, Cambodia, Iraq, North Korea and China. Despite their incredible diversity, they are frequently treated as an homogenous group, or mistakenly submerged in international of migrant groups, compromising attention to their wide-ranging individual and cultural needs. Therefore, we encourage you to read this section as a context-builder and not as the definitive situation for all RB students at VUW.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) defines a refugee as

“... a person who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.”⁶

⁶ UNHCR (1951) cited by New Zealand Immigration Service (2004) *Refugee voices: A journey towards resettlement*. Wellington: New Zealand Immigration Service, p. 17.

Use of the term 'refugee-background' rather than 'refugee' in reference to these young people is important: 'refugee-hood' is – or should be - a temporary chapter in one's life, not a permanent state of being or a defining characteristic.

To tentatively generalise, then, many RB students do contend with particular forms of discrimination in a world "which has grown increasingly hostile to refugees"⁷ - especially in the context of the 'global war on terror'. They may have also experienced fragmented and disrupted education before resettlement, and often arrive in New Zealand with limited proficiency in English.

For many RB students, the relatively liberal nature of mainstream New Zealand culture can be hard to adjust to. As Boyden explains, "forced migrants often come from comparatively conservative rural areas where gender, generation and class or caste hierarchies are entrenched and interaction between individuals of different social status strictly limited by tradition."⁸ In general, students in New Zealand are granted more freedom and flexibility, and are expected to be self-motivated, which can be challenging for people accustomed to more regimented, disciplinary styles of schooling and/or dictatorial regimes. Differing expectations for intra-familial relationships can also be an issue for local RB students.⁹ While their New Zealand peers might have few familial responsibilities, treat their parents with little deference, and leave the family home as soon as they finish secondary school, the expectations placed on RB students within their families can be quite different.

Many RB students struggle to access funds and other financial resources. A New Zealand Immigration Service study noted that only 28 percent of RB student respondents, who

⁷ UNHCR. (2006). *The State of the World's Refugees: Human Displacement in the New Millennium*, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 1.

⁸ Boyden, J (2001) 'Children's Participation in the Context of Forced Migration', in *Participatory Learning and Action*, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), London, 42, p. 1.

⁹ Ibid.

had been in New Zealand less than six months, had been successful in obtaining a student loan following an attempt to apply for one.¹⁰

History of research with RB students at VUW

Participatory research by postgraduate geography students in 2006 revealed that RB students faced an array of challenges to achieving academic success at VUW. The research aimed “to determine what support services are available to VUW RB students and how they can be better supported in the future.”¹¹ It was the first research to be carried out specifically on support services for RB students at a New Zealand university.

The research showed that, in general, RB students come from countries and cultures that place strong emphasis on community support and oral communication. Many RB students are also unaware that the university expects students to be in charge of their own learning. This can make the individualistic, writing-focussed, academic environment at VUW particularly challenging to navigate.

From this 2006 study, most pertinent to our research were the suggestions to establish mentors/ ‘campus coaches’, study groups, and an RB student network and space (see Table One on page 22).

In this study, all key factors the students identified to help them overcome challenges involved considerable personal contact and support.¹² Cultural sensitivity in the university environment was considered the number one ‘stepping stone’ to their achievement, and to maintaining wellbeing during their studies.¹³ Encouragement was

¹⁰ NZIS (2004). Cited in Horner et al (2006).

¹¹ Horner et al (2006), p. 6.

¹² Ibid., pp. 30-31.

¹³ Ibid. p. 19.

also a high priority for participants, while personal or one-on-one support was considered essential to maintaining motivation (as well as gaining much-needed academic guidance).¹⁴

Table One: Recommendations from the 2006 report most relevant to our research

<p>☐ Mentors / Campus Coaches – Some participants suggested having Campus Coaches or mentors to whom RB students can relate. They would not only provide these students with the one-on-one academic support they need, but also offer an opportunity for them to break through barriers of shyness or discomfort in speaking about their needs. Some RB students prefer to have a mentor of the same ethnicity, but for others this is not a problem, as long as the coaches or mentors are understanding and approachable, and know how to deal with the individual requirements of students.</p> <p>☐ Study Groups – Study groups provide academic support, social opportunities and encouragement to students. RB students and service providers alike saw value in establishing RB student study groups in the university. There was a discussion about whether the study groups should be situated internally, or externally to the university as an extension to the current 'Homework Club' for high school students, but it was recommended that study groups remain in the university to encourage networking of VUW RB students on campus.</p> <p>☐ RB Student Network and Space – RB students do not have established networks in VUW that facilitate discussion of RB student-specific issues. There was a desire amongst participants for a formal RB student network to be established, and for a space to be made available for RB students to meet, and share experiences and information. If a permanent space was not available to RB students, it was suggested that a regular meeting time and space could be scheduled, similar to the Mature Student Network model.</p> <p>Horner, Cedric, Sharna Khan and Katheryn Paton. With Awad Hagos. And Sara Kindon(2006) <i>Victoria University of Wellington: supporting refugee background students to achieve their goals</i>. Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, pp. 30-31</p>

This year, supported by the academic network, our research team set out to build on the 2006 research findings. Initially, we aimed for this research to contribute to the

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 21.

development of an appropriate mentoring programme for RB students at VUW. However, as the project progressed, it became clear that the club we had helped to establish – Global Remix (GR) – was providing much-needed personal academic and social support for RB students in itself. A more conventional ‘one-on-one’ mentoring programme would lose the synergistic benefits and momentum of the informal ‘collective mentoring’ that was already occurring through the club. According to Muntaz (International Business and Geography student, third year, from Somalia, 22 years old), **“I think it's good to do it [mentoring] the collective way, not one on one way... I, to be honest, would feel uncomfortable with one on one...”**¹⁵



Photo Four: (From left to right) Rahma, Ridwan, Caroline, Ummy, Dennis, Fuad, Terefe, Ella, Tinza, Taw Reh and Monica at a GR meeting, 2nd May 2008.

¹⁵ Jimale, Muntaz, Pers. comm, 24/07/08.

Approach and Methods of the GEOG 404 Team

This work with refugee, migrant and other students at Victoria University has been founded on practices and ideas relating to Participatory Development, and informed by Participatory Action Research.

Participatory Development (PD)

PD refers to practices in which self motivated groups in civil society are supported to implement development initiatives on their own terms. It is informed by an epistemology which argues that “dispossessed, excluded peoples” are the most capable actors “in asserting, defining, organising and acting to create and sustain their own futures.”¹⁶

Participatory Action Research (PAR)

PAR emerged in the 1970s and was influenced by Paulo Freire’s and Mahatma Gandhi’s theories on the consciousness and agency of the marginalised.¹⁷ It is informed by the knowledges and realities of local people, and is reliant on iterative cycles of action and reflection. This entails “creating knowledge...that leads to action and, through reflection,

¹⁶ Morse, Richard, Anisur Rahman and Kersten L. Johnson (1995) ‘Preface’. In Richard Morse, Anisur Rahman and Kersten L. Johnson (eds.) (1995) *Grassroots Horizons: connecting participatory developments East and West*. Oxford and IBH Publishing LTD, New Delhi, p. iii.

¹⁷ Kindon, Sara., Rachel Pain and Mike Kesby (2007) ‘Participatory Action Research: origins, approaches and methods’. In Sara Kindon, Rachel Pain and Mike Kesby (eds.) (2007) *Participatory Action Research Approaches and Methods: connecting people, participation and place*. Routledge, London.

to new knowledge and new action”.¹⁸ Such a process can mean making mistakes, disempowering oneself and having to be humble and ‘unlearn’ knowledge. It demands the undertaking of “collaborative processes of research, education and action” and is often termed an activist approach as it is “explicitly oriented towards social transformation.”¹⁹

PAR and Youth Development

PAR with young people opens a space where youth agency can be exerted over the research process. According to Cahill, “including young people as partners in research reveals an understanding of young people as not only assets, but as agents of change.”²⁰ Our PAR with students at VUW is relatively unique as it goes beyond youth inclusion, to research done with youth, by youth. Through our involvement in GR, we aimed to “challenge social exclusion, democratise the research process, and build the capacity of young people to analyse and transform their own lives and communities.”²¹ This links back to the principles of the *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa*, developed by the Ministry of Youth Development.²² By working with a strengths-based approach that built connections and quality relationships between young people in a participatory manner, we feel our research has helped to promote, for some youth in GR, a “sense of contributing something of value to society; feeling[s] of connectedness to others and to

¹⁸ Burkey, Stan. (1993) *People First: A guide to self-reliant, participatory rural development*. Zed Books LTD, London.

¹⁹ Hall, cited in Kindon et al. (2007), p. 9.

²⁰ Ibid p. 298.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ministry of Youth Development (2004) ‘The Vision and its Six Principles’, *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa*, <http://www.myd.govt.nz/YouthDevelopmentStrategyAotearoa/theprinciples.aspx>, accessed on 18 November 2008.

society; belief that they have choices about their future; [and a] feeling of being positive and comfortable with their own identity.”²³

The GEOG 404 Team’s Approach to Research with GR

Our initial objective in this project was to carry out research to facilitate the development of an appropriate mentoring programme for RB students at VUW. At a welcome event organised by the staff network, held on March 27 2008, an initial list of RB students was developed. This was then used to invite them to a students-only meeting, which we facilitated. At this meeting, it became clear that people were interested in starting up a club to provide more immediate support to students, so we offered our support to this initiative. GR emerged soon after.

Initially, we envisioned that our role in GR would be marginal and our primary focus would be research regarding an appropriate mentoring programme for RB students. We did, however, agree to provide academic support and guidance 'in the meantime' - until such a programme could be established. We ran several research sessions in club meeting times, in which we used various participatory methods, such as body mapping and diagramming²⁴ to map the social resources of a good and bad mentor (For examples see Appendix One on page 88). However, over time it became clear that a) these research sessions were not teaching us, or anyone else in GR, a great deal that we did not already know, b) the club was gaining an impetus of its own, with new members arriving every week, and c) our organisational and academic support was still very much needed and wanted.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Chambers, Robert (2002) *Participatory workshops : a sourcebook of 21 sets of ideas and activities*, Earthscan Publications, London.



Photo Five: Mustafa and Jin at a GR meeting, 24th July 2008

Then, following a key class discussion, we realised that in the process of helping to develop the unwieldy 'side project' of GR, we had learnt more about supporting RB students than any more formalised research process could have shown us. Through iterative cycles of action and reflection, integral to PAR's aim of transforming realities,²⁵ we realised there was no need to carry out separate 'research'. Rather the club is, and always has been, the best and most appropriate place and space for everyone to learn. By simply 'walking alongside' students - proofreading essays, helping to navigate the university bureaucracies, acting as advocates, showing where to find more specific help, listening to people's stories, sharing our own, and encouraging leadership in others - we have been doing exactly what a mentor would. This has ultimately provided us with information about RB students' needs that is so much more significant than anything we gained through asking them more abstractly about what a good mentor and mentoring programme might be. From this, we can say with confidence, 'this is what people use', and not simply 'this is what people imagine they might use.'

²⁵ Kindon et al (2007).

Interestingly, our team's shift in understanding of what constitutes research parallels that of Guerin et al's 2002 study with Somali people in Hamilton. This notes that:

“much of what we are all really learning from our studies comes from the combined, or ethnographic, research that includes our informal interactions in the community...It includes observations at Somali weddings, for example; observations that we wrote down afterwards...”²⁶

Hence, while we may have moved away from using the kinds of research 'tools' frequently favoured by PD practitioners, we believe that our approach remains firmly bound to the central principle of learning through iterative cycles of action and reflection found within PAR. This required 'unlearning' various ideas that we had initially viewed as given - most crucially, the notion that a one-on-one mentoring programme was what RB students most needed and wanted.

Within this PAR approach, we have also used phone surveys to help construct an up-to-date database of current GR members. While this method is a more traditional form of information-gathering, it was necessary to develop a much-needed GR database, which supported our overall approach and we hope will facilitate the continuation of the club next year.

Our Report-Writing Methodology

The way in which this report has been written is in keeping, to a certain extent, with a PAR approach, which seeks to value and promote diverse voices and collaboration. The 'Stories' section, beginning on page 60, is written entirely by members of GR who are

²⁶ Guerin, Bernard, Pauline Guerin, Roda Omar Diiriye and Abdirizak Abdi (2002) *'Living in a Close Community: The Everyday Life of Somali Refugees'*, *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 54 (2), p. 119

not part of our GEOG 404 research team. In addition, while initially we imagined that our *own* experiences as club members would not be relevant to this research as the project was focussed on RB students, it is in fact entirely in keeping with a PAR approach to abandon any pretence of objectivity, and reflect upon our own role in the process.²⁷ Further to this, the broadening reach of GR to include migrant and Kiwi students makes our experience – as Kiwi students involved in the club – particularly relevant.

When carrying out PAR with an identifiable community group it is difficult at best to guarantee the anonymity of participants.²⁸ In this report we have chosen to represent those who have contributed their voices in bold and with their real names, their area of study, their country of origin and their age (when consent has been given). We have done this because we believe it is important to link the voices within this report to their owners. This makes clear that those who contributed are real people with multi-faceted identities, rather than nameless, faceless refugee informants. We have also chosen not to differentiate between RB and other members' voices in this report, as we feel this betrays the inclusive, 'non-pigeon-holing' ethic the members of the club have worked hard to create.

Research Ethics

Throughout this report, we have aimed to make the ethics of our approach to research and writing explicit. These ethics are firmly bound to a PAR approach. Traditional social research is based on the principle that to act ethically is to do no harm and leave without having a perceivable impact on participants. However, PAR moves beyond these

²⁷ Kindon et al, 2007.

²⁸ Manzo, Lynne C. & Nathan Brightbill (2007) 'Toward a Participatory Ethics'. In Sara Kindon, Rachel Pain and Mike Kesby (eds.) (2007) *Participatory Action Research Approaches and Methods: connecting people, participation and place*. Routledge, London.

principles by generating positive change for those involved.²⁹ By helping to establish GR, we have contributed to the creation of a supportive space, which we believe has benefited many GR members.

More specifically, our application of PAR was informed by a code of ethics developed for and by GEOG 404 (see Table Two on page 31).

We have also tried extremely hard to represent people in ways in which they feel comfortable. This has entailed, among other things, seeking permission to use identifying information, quotes and photos, and checking back with participants to ensure our findings, analysis and interpretation of their comments are appropriate.



Photo Six: Siry at a GR meeting, 8 May 2008

²⁹ Ibid.

Table Two: Geography 404 Code of Ethics, 2008

GEOG 404 – Code of Ethics

As a team working with our research partners, we committed to:

- **be transparent, open and honest with ourselves, our research partners and other stakeholders,**
- **respect people's desires for confidentiality,**
- **work respectfully with all people; including them, acknowledging them and accepting them,**
- **work in a spirit of partnership and co-operation with each other, our research partners and other stakeholders, recognizing and celebrating diverse knowledge,**
- **be open to two-way communication, and listen to others,**
- **endeavour to build trusting and friendly relationships,**
- **reflect on our actions, and practice reflexivity,**
- **keep our focus on people at the centre,**
- **work towards equity in all of its forms,**
- **'walk the talk'.**

Developed in class for GEOG 404 on the 5th May, 2008, by Kendyll Morton, Jenni Hammond, Sarah Clarke, Jamie Burford, Ella Smits, Caroline Cowie, Monica Evans and Thomas Vink

Limitations of this project

This report is specific to the time and context of our involvement with RB students at VUW and in GR. Therefore, its findings may not always translate well in other places and spaces. While GR's membership has grown substantially over 2008, we in no way claim that this represents all RB students at VUW. Nor do we claim that GR has been of equal value to all members. While some members attend meetings every week, many only show up from time to time. Some would prefer more of a focus on academic support while others especially enjoy the social aspects of the club. It is also difficult for FS and EPP students to attend meetings. This is because FS students have classes in Karori and EPP students have a very full timetable. It is clear that an ongoing challenge for the club will be balancing people's different needs, and asking who is missing out and why.

While making close friends through GR has been incredibly rewarding, this has also posed a limitation for this research. As friends, members may be reluctant to critique our approach, interpretations and the report in general. These "ties of friendship" may have also acted as a form of coercion, where people involved in GR felt obliged to participate.³⁰ On the other hand, as friends "the possibility to say no may have existed in a similar way to a friend who declines an invitation to pursue a particular activity."³¹

Although we would have preferred to bring drafts to GR meetings for members to thoroughly review, we were unable to begin the report before meetings ended for the year. Therefore, this report is based on what we have seen and what members have chosen to tell us so far. Furthermore, the 'Stories' section of this report was written by people who felt comfortable doing so, and perceived that they had benefited from being a part of GR. It is important to remember that, while we asked all members to

³⁰ Browne, Kath (2003) 'Negotiations and Feildworkings: friendship and feminist research' *ACME: an International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, 2 (2), p. 137.

³¹ Ibid.

contribute to this section if they wished, of GR's 49 members, only ten chose to offer their story.

Overall, this report is mediated through our subjectivities and research and writing processes. We have compartmentalised themes which we have extracted from realities that are much richer and fuller than our report could hope to convey. In constructing these themes, we have disconnected quotes and stories from their original context. Through this process, we have restricted possibilities for the reader to interpret their nuanced shades of meaning. As Geertz explains, this kind of social research hinges on "rescu[ing] the "said" of such discourse from its perishing occasions and fix[ing] it in perusable terms,"³² so it will always represent an interpretation of the interpretations of others. Therefore, while we have endeavoured to represent GR and its members as sincerely as possible, we offer a caution to the reader to read this report as *our* understanding of this experience, rather than objective truth or fact.³³



Photo Seven: (from left to right) Terefe, Monica, Tom, Kim and Will writing greetings in different languages, 24 July 2008

³² Geertz, Clifford (1973) 'The Interpretation of Cultures: selected essays'. In Robert L. Walsh and Kirk M. Endicott (2006) *Taking Sides: clashing views in cultural anthropology* (2nd ed.). McGraw-Hill, Iowa, p. 10.

³³ Ibid, p. 9.

Painting a Picture: What is Global Remix?

"It's fun, it's a place to socialise, it's multicultural, its a place to get help, it's for everyone, it's a place of learning, it's a place to make new friends, it's a place to meet new people, it's a place to learn about different cultures, it's a great place, it's a place to learn new languages, it's a place where you can be yourself, it's a place to have adventures, it's a place to learn English, and it's a place to meet kind people"

Anna Stoyanova, Thomas Vink, Rahma Adan, Caroline Cowie, Monica Evans, Terefe Ejigu, HyunJin Park, Junwoong Choi (Ethan), Mustafa Sheikh, KwanMin Kim (Mark), Global Remix meeting, 31 July 2008

On the 2nd of May 2008, a group of RB students and the GEOG 404 team met for the first time as a club. In this meeting, the group developed the name "Global Remix" out of a number of members' suggestions (see Table Three on page 35). Together, members

formed a mission statement: “To provide academic and social support for refugee background students at Victoria University.”

Table Three: What Should We Call Our Club?

What Should We Call Our Club?

Terefe: “Re-unite?”

Ummy: “Nah, too patronising.”

Ella: “Kiwi mix? Pick ‘n’ Mix?”

Ummy: “Re-mix?”

Terefe: “International remix?”

Ummy: “Too formal.”

Mon: “Global remix?”

Sadiya: “Yeah!”

Terefe Ejigu, Ummy Amin, Ella Smits, Monica Evans, Sadiya Jimale (2008) Pers. comm, 01/05/08

Facilitated by the GEOG 404 team, GR meetings initially centred around ice breaker games to aid relationship and trust building between members. On the 22nd May, the group held its Inaugural General Meeting (IGM), in which members were elected to executive positions and GR officially affiliated as a club with the Victoria University of Wellington Students Association (VUWSA).

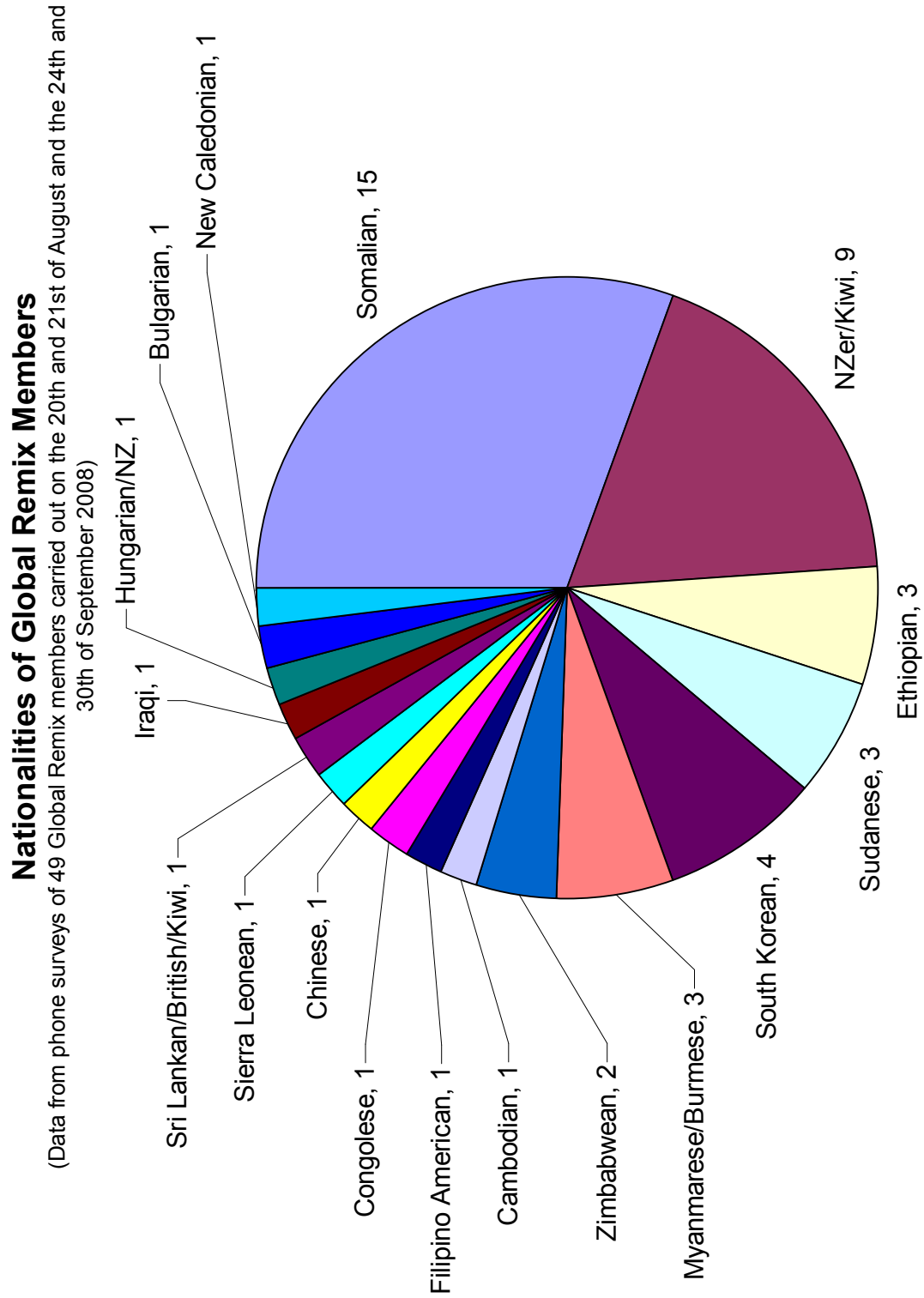
At the Annual General Meeting (AGM), held on the 25th of September 2008, the mission statement was amended to: “To provide academic and social support for refugee background, migrant, international and other students”, to better represent GR’s members and the direction the club has taken.



Photo Eight: (from left to right) Ella, Monica, Ummy, Terefe, Taw Reh, Tinza, Dennis, Fuad, Ridwan, Caroline and Rahma playing an icebreaker game at a GR meeting, 2nd May 2008

Over the year GR’s membership has grown steadily. Currently, the club’s 49 members represent 17 different nationalities (see Chart One on page 37)

Chart One: Nationalities of GR Members



While the majority of members fall into the youth category (of people aged 12-24, defined by the 2002 Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa),³⁴ there is a wide representation of ages within the club, with four 29 year olds and three 35 years olds, for example (see Chart Four in Appendix Two on page 92). This wide age range is an unusual feature for most clubs at VUW, but has acted as a real strength for GR. The experiences of some of the older members, both inside and outside of university, are a great asset to the club. Like those members who have spent a number of years at university, the older members have acted as informal 'mentors', not only to younger members, but also to the GEOG 404 team. This diversity may also be an indication that many RB students study at university in New Zealand at an older age.

The huge diversity in the number of years each member of the club has been in New Zealand is also a strong feature of how club identity has formed (See Chart Two on page 40). Members who have been in New Zealand for a number of years have been able to use this experience to help those newer to the country to settle. This has also led to diversity in how members benefit from GR. For many students who have recently arrived to New Zealand, the club is primarily a way to make friends and practice English. Many members who have been in the country for longer seek academic help through the club, for example with proof-reading essays. For some of these members, GR has also taken on a political nature, and they have intentions of using it as a vehicle to push specific issues related to the treatment of refugees and other minority groups in New Zealand. A number of members also found GR a great place to give something back (which as the Section on 'Giving Back' on pages 58 and 59 explores, is very important to many members).

Of GR's 49 members, the sex ratio is reasonably even, with 20 females and 29 males. The club tries to maintain an awareness of gender issues and include both males and females in decision-making and participation in club activities. However, it seems that

³⁴ Ministry of Youth Affairs (2002) *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa: Action for Child and Youth Development*, Wellington: Ministry of Youth Affairs.

many of GR's female members feel less comfortable than males attending social activities outside of meetings, such as football and bowling, as few females have attended these events. In the future, it will be important to think of activities which cater more to the interests and comfort zones of the club's female members.

Considerable diversity is also present in members' areas of study (see Chart Three on page 41). The range of knowledge within GR is a key resource that several people have drawn on for academic support and informal mentoring.

For more information on what helps members achieve academically and people that help GR members feel 'at home' at VUW see charts Five and Six respectively, in Appendix Two on pages 93 and 94. A brief chronology of key events related to GR and research this year is provided in a timeline in Appendix Three on page 95.



Photo Nine: (from left to right) Fuad, Monica, Caroline, Mustafa (aka 'Weird Stranger') and Tom at Titahi Bay, 24th June 2008

Chart Two: How Long GR Members Have Been In New Zealand

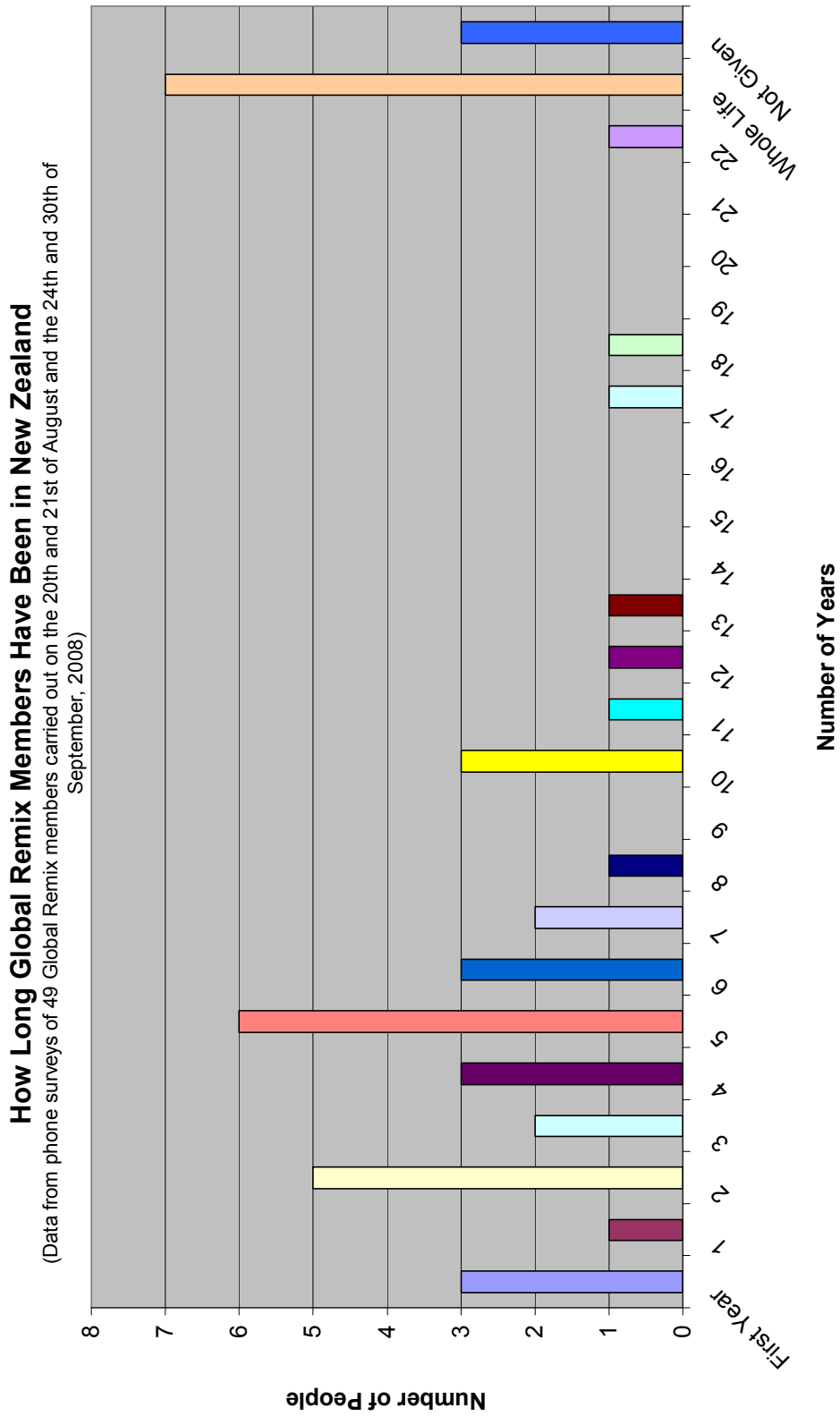
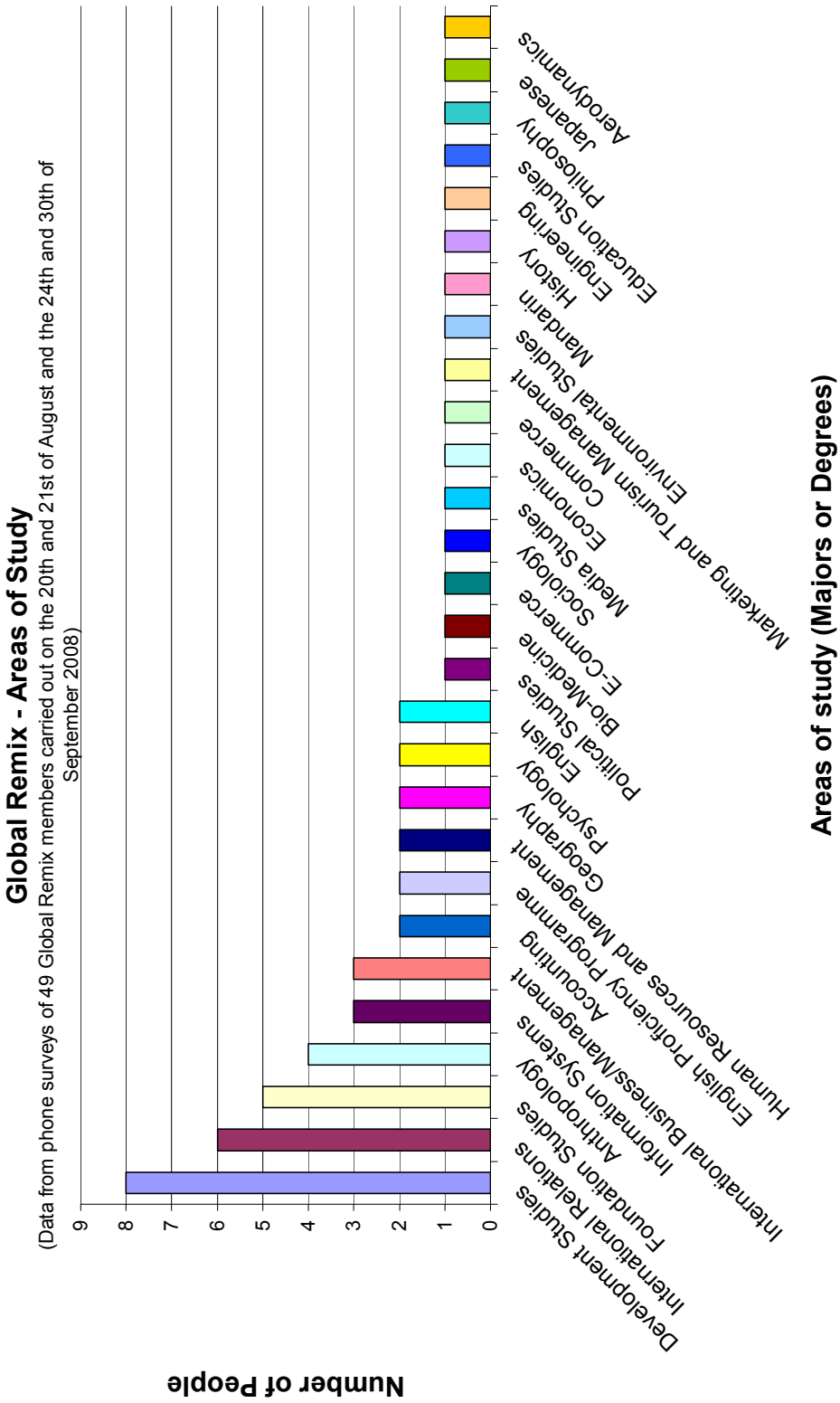


Chart Three: GR- Areas of Study



Throughout the year the club has held several social events such as a stall on clubs day, a food stall in the Quad, and a bowling trip in the mid-trimester break. A promising indoor football team was also formed and competed against other teams on Sunday mornings in VUW's recreation centre. In addition, members have invited each other to events within their own communities, such as an end-of-Ramadan feast and Ethiopian New Year. To mark the end of the academic year, Global Remix held a celebration and prize-giving on October 15 in the tennis pavilion on Salamanca Road.

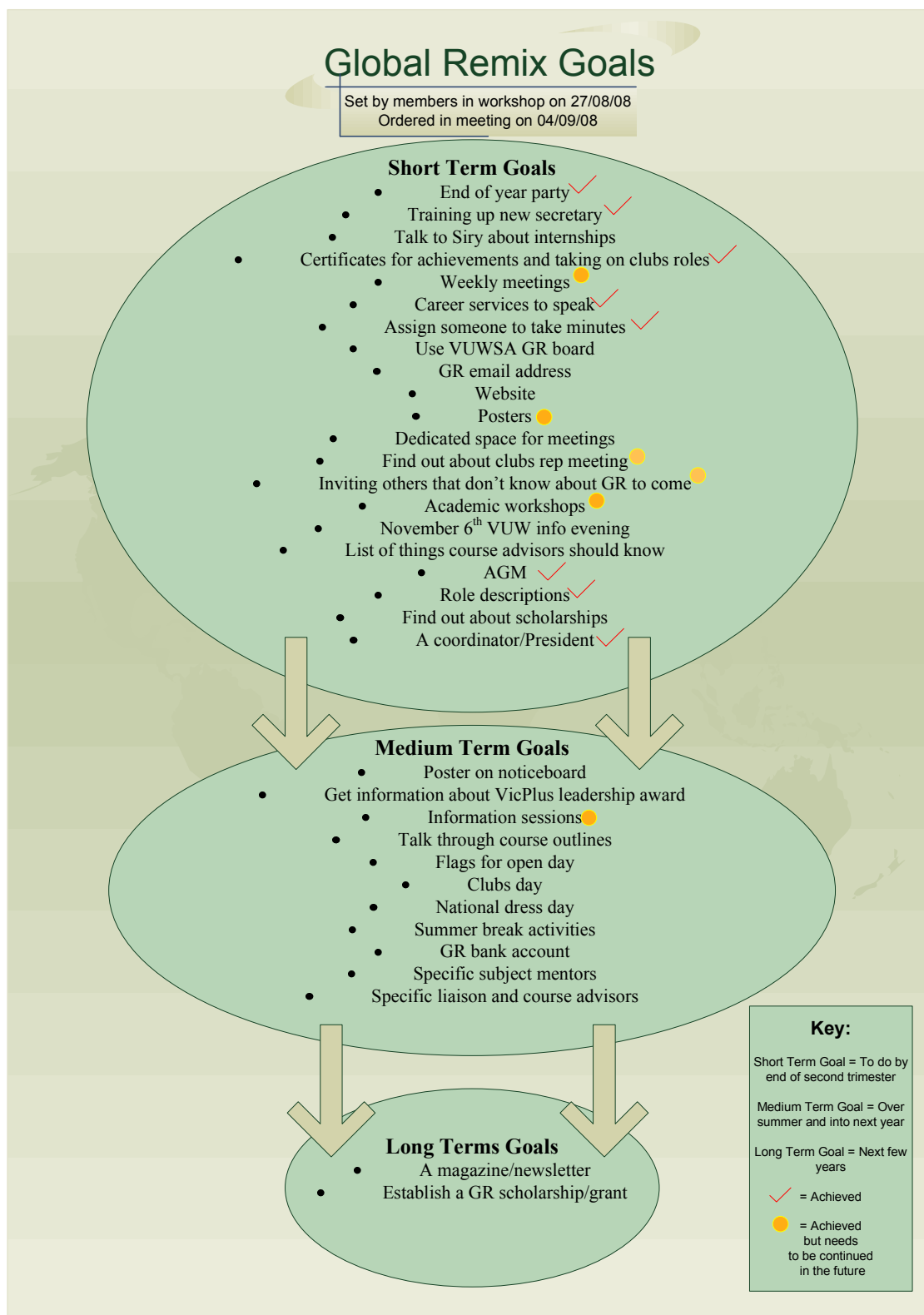
Contributing to the club's goal of providing academic support, several workshops were organised. These offered members the opportunity to learn new skills and meet friendly faces from different organisations and support services. Perhaps most importantly, the club has become a space where members feel comfortable asking each other for help with studies and other aspects of university life. People also appreciate the chance to learn about other languages and cultures.

In the mid trimester break, GR ran a training day to help affirm the club's identity, develop team work skills and begin to chart a course for the future. Members worked to form short, medium and long term goals, many of which have been achieved (See Table Four on page 43).

GR's visibility has increased throughout the year. An article about the club was published in Issue 16, August 2008, of the Ministry of Youth Development magazine, '12-24' (see a copy of the original article in Appendix Four on page 97). The club is also mentioned in the 2009 New Student Guide for VUW.

Looking to the future, one of GR's key challenges will be obtaining a permanent room that the club can make its own, into which people can come to study and socialise at any time. It is crucial that RB students feel like there is a place for them on campus. Through GR, these students have made their presence felt at VUW in a positive way. Providing a space for them will help enhance this positive presence.

Table Four: Global Remix Goals



Themes

A number of key themes emerged for us (the GEOG 404 team) over the course of our involvement with GR, around issues facing and support for RB students at VUW.

Identity

In order to find out how best to support RB students, building a picture of who RB students at VUW actually are seems a logical first step. However, this is more difficult than it might seem, not only because of the vast diversity within the category 'RB students', but also because these students generally dislike being identified as RB. Many feel that this defines them as a perpetual victim in the eyes of others, when as formerly mentioned, refugee-hood is only a temporary phase in people's lives, and is just one common aspect of otherwise diverse life experiences. Fuad (E-Commerce and Information Systems student, third year, from Somalia, 24 years old) elaborates on this stereotyping of RB students at VUW:

"when you just come in, they (the other students, lecturers) already have a whole picture of you. They already think, "this guy's not going to make it" "why's he wasting his time..."³⁵

However, while RB students in GR are clear that being RB is not all that they are, they generally agree that there *are* some common challenges faced by students in situations like theirs. As Osman (Philosophy student, third year, from Sudan, 24 years old) comments, university institutions **"need to understand that we are like other students but also we are not like other students. We have other needs."**³⁶

³⁵ Farah, Fuad. Pers. comm, 17/07/08.

³⁶ Osman, Osman. Pers. comm, 16/05/08.

Some of these needs may, in fact, be more informed by culture than by 'refugee-hood'. As Faye (pseudonym) claims, while African RB students might share challenges, these could be very different to those experienced by RB students from elsewhere in the globe - **"different cultures, different needs."**³⁷ Many issues – as expanded on in the following sections – seem to relate more generally to being outside the cultural, ethnic and/or linguistic norm at VUW. Hence, international students would appear to share many issues with RB students, as noted by Mustafa (Political Science and International Relations student, second year, from Somalia, 25 years old).³⁸ The increasing number of international students attending GR meetings seems to confirm this. However, despite these similarities, there is considerable targeted support for international students within the university. But, as of yet, equivalent support is not available for RB students.

While GR members were adamant from the club's inception that it should be open to anyone, our research team initially saw the increasing number of 'non-RB' students attending as a 'problem', because of our own focus on supporting *RB* students, and our idea that the ideal for GR would be for it to be run entirely by and for RB students.

However, it became clear over the course of the project that the club *was* meeting needs for RB students – and for international and Kiwi students too. In fact, interaction with 'Kiwi' students is an important feature of meetings for many RB and international members: as Taw Reh (EPP student, from Burma/Myanmar, 20 years old) comments, it is **"good for me to talk to other students who are native speakers, practice English,"**³⁹ and Kim (Accounting student, second year, from South Korea) enjoys being able to **"make Kiwi friends."**⁴⁰ At the September 2008 AGM, the club's mission statement was

³⁷ Faye (pseudonym), Pers. comm, 17/07/08.

³⁸ Sheikh, Mustafa. Pers. comm, 17/07/08.

³⁹ Nga, Taw Reh. Pers. comm, 30/09/08.

⁴⁰ Seok, Kim. Pers. comm, 30/09/08.

altered to “provid[ing] social and academic support to RB, *migrant and other* (emphasis highlights alteration) students at VUW,” reflecting this broadening of focus.

In sum, then, RB students have a broad range of identities, and it is important to appreciate that ‘refugee-hood’ is but one facet of these. Hence, we can never hope to draw an accurate and all-encompassing picture of ‘RB student needs.’ However, through the creation of an open, accepting and supportive space, many of the specific needs of individual RB students – and other students too – can be met, both one-on-one and collectively.



Photo Ten: Siry and Kim at the end of year GR party, 15th October 2008

Negotiating Support Services

Within the club, RB students have little knowledge about, or faith in, services that can assist them. Early in the year, one RB student did not attend GR meetings solely because he thought the club was associated with institutions like Refugee Services and Studylink. There is a widespread perception that institutions lack understanding about what students truly need. As Osman states, “**Studylink only help you with material stuff,**

then they leave you.”⁴¹ It is also clear that many services within the university are easy to miss, or are misinterpreted, when students first arrive. While student support services are available, they are not always well known or publicised. There is not enough initial support available to show RB students where they can go for help and who are the best people to talk to. This is illustrated by Faye’s description: **“I didn’t know about SLS at first, but when I went to Foundation Studies they told us” – many students “know they’re there, but don’t really know what they mean – they need someone to take them there, show them around.”⁴²**

This lack of initial information is also emphasised by Fuad, who states that VUWSA are:

“open-headed... when you have a problem with lecturers. They don’t just follow uni laws, they’re outside that. It’s good to have someone outside, so you don’t see it as just one organisation... But it took me a year to find out [about them]... I didn’t know before what they can do. Before, I felt like, what can I do?”⁴³

Students who are unaware of the support available to them may struggle unnecessarily at university. Having to also navigate cultural differences and language barriers can compound these difficulties.

Misinterpretation of services is further complicated by conflicting statements from different providers about the same issues. For example, some EPP students have had problems trying to get help from SLS when their teacher is unavailable to help them, because of miscommunications between the two services. These little failures to communicate procedures accurately can have huge ramifications for a student’s confidence in seeking help in the future.

⁴¹ Osman, Osman, Pers. comm, 16/05/08.

⁴² Faye, Pers. comm, 17/07/08.

⁴³ Farah, Fuad, Pers. comm, 17/07/08.

When people and institutions make a concerted effort to address individual needs, students really appreciate it. For example, Dennis' (FS student, from Burma/Myanmar, 32 years old) EPP teacher helped him to navigate bureaucratic processes when he could not get money from Studylink during the month-long gap between EPP ending and FS starting. Dennis is very grateful that she **“takes care of not only our study, but gives time to discuss our personal lives.”**⁴⁴

Hence, having a personal connection to VUW services can be extremely important for RB students. As identified in the Background section on page 20, these students often place strong emphasis on community support and oral communication – something that is lacking in the NZ university environment. For example, Osman states, **“the more you hang out the more you get to understand – easier to help each other... makes it easier for them to get help because they already understand each other in other respects.”**⁴⁵ Many services are viewed as challenging obstacles rather than approachable sources of assistance.

GR has started to provide this personal and human element to supporting people, by placing strong emphasis on building relationships and being student-led and -focussed. As Faye explains, **“students who've done it before are really helpful, [they] stop us from giving up because we see it was hard for them and they've done it.”**⁴⁶ According to Osman, **“Global Remix is the place to be if you are seriously wanting to make a better future, as it is ran by students themselves and they are the ones who care most about their own future.”**⁴⁷ However, this kind of support should be more widely available. Every student at VUW should be able to expect that staff will take a personal interest in helping them settle into their studies. As Siry (International Management and

⁴⁴ Maang, Dennis, Pers. comm, 17/07/08.

⁴⁵ Osman, Osman, Pers. comm, 30/09/08.

⁴⁶ Faye, Pers. comm, 17/07/08.

⁴⁷ Osman, Osman, Pers. comm, 20/09/08.

Business student, second year, from Sudan, 33 years old) explains, **“this club is the best thing anyone could be doing for RB students...we just need young, passionate people ... spending time with people.”**⁴⁸



Photo Eleven: Kuo and Jodie at the end of year GR party, 15 October 2008

‘Good Intentions’

Many organisations and individuals in Wellington are interested in the situations of RB people. In fact, a proliferation of projects appears to be directed towards them at present. As word about GR has spread, the group has been approached by a number of people from different organisations looking chiefly for ‘refugee’ and ‘Muslim’ students to interview and/or involve in projects. While this interest is encouraging in some respects, it is important to remember that the ‘good intentions’ of these actors will not

⁴⁸ Ibrahim, Sirelkhatim., Pers. comm, 07/07/08.

always translate into beneficial outcomes for the researched RB students, and may in fact leave them feeling exploited and pigeonholed. As Siry puts it, **“there are so many organisations trying to help, but they get lost in the big words and in their own interests, in ‘nibbling and networking’ they call it.”**⁴⁹ Some actors even seem to feel that their ‘charitable’ aims excuse them from normal protocols of sensitivity and respect for members, which is alarming.

It is crucial that groups such as GR are cautious about the extent to which they allow outside, ‘well-intentioned’ actors to access group information and events. The club must ensure that members never feel obliged to participate in any project ‘for their own good’, and are fully aware of their right to decide how they do and do not wish to be represented.



Photo Twelve: Caroline, Monica and Tom at a meeting, 19 April 2008

Of course, the GEOG 404 team acknowledge that we, also, have our own self-serving agenda external to that of GR – completing our graduate course, which will ultimately

⁴⁹ Ibid.

contribute to our Masters qualifications. Our relationship with GR and its members, however, reaches far above and beyond ‘course requirements’. We hope that our involvement in the club over the last seven months has been sensitive and respectful and has provided tangible benefits for members, and we believe that the stories published here bear witness to this.

Isolating University Culture

The individualistic university environment can create feelings of isolation, confusion and loneliness for many students. According to Adam (pseudonym), there is **“too much freedom... all up to you...it’s everyone for himself.”**⁵⁰ Students who are new to the university may not seek help as they see their own confusion as a personal failure. As Sadiya (Bio-medicine student, second year, from Somalia) states, **“I thought I should already know at the beginning... but I didn’t know... thought there must be something wrong with me.”**⁵¹

Lecturers are frequently perceived as intimidating, unapproachable and/or unwilling to help. While the university expects each student to work individually, lecturers may be unwilling to cater for individual needs. As Fuad comments, **“most lecturers, you ask them, they just refer you to Blackboard, they say “I’ve got 3000 students, I can’t help you”.”**⁵² Once a student has been turned away once, they are unlikely to ask again.

Friends and classmates are often a key resource for students when institutional support fails or is inadequate. But as Fuad notes, **“if you don’t have those kind of people, it’s hard.”**⁵³ However, RB and other international students may have trouble building

⁵⁰ Adam, Pers. comm, 17/07/08.

⁵¹ Jimale, Sadiya. Pers. comm, 17/07/08.

⁵² Farah, Pers. comm, 17/07/08.

⁵³ Ibid.

relationships with New Zealanders. As Dennis mentions, **“It’s hard to make friends – I was shy in Burma, I’m even shy here!”**⁵⁴ New Zealanders themselves often struggle to ‘break the ice’ with new people, even if they are interested in them – as Tinza (FS student, from Burma/Myanmar) says, it is **“hard to get involved to Kiwis”**.⁵⁵ Terefe (Development Studies and Psychology student, first year, from Ethiopia, 20 years old) explains that in New Zealand, **“everyone knows each other, but there’s limits [compared to Ethiopia, where] people interact with each other more [but it’s] not a bad thing, it’s just how the different culture is.”**⁵⁶



Photo Thirteen: (from left to right) Fuad, Mustafa, Tom, Monica and Siry on Clubs day, 2nd July 2008

While many RB students persevere and find a way through, the isolating nature of the university can be too much for some people. As Mustafa (Political Science and International Relations student, second year, from Somalia, 25 years old) illustrates: **“I know people who faced that stuff [at university and said] ‘I’m not going to go back’...**

⁵⁴ Maang, Dennis, Pers. comm, 25/05/08.

⁵⁵ Peng, Tinza Uk. Pers. comm, 17/07/08.

⁵⁶ Ejigu, Terefe. Pers. comm, 24/07/08.

But there's no life on a silver plate.”⁵⁷

Generally, RB students would like more personal connections to staff and other students, and more accessible information about the many avenues for help and support available at VUW.

Need for Connectedness

For many new students to Victoria, the challenges mentioned above intensify the natural desire for a sense of belonging, involvement and connectedness. As Tinza says,

“I want to have fun, but sometimes I am shy – my culture is a little bit different from this culture – I find it a little bit challenging... I feel lonely – find it hard to get involved...I can't understand what people are speaking about.”⁵⁸



Photo Fourteen: (from left to right) Tom, Fuad, Rahma and Ella at the GR food stall, 12 August 2008

⁵⁷ Sheikh, Mustafa, Pers. comm, 17/07/08.

⁵⁸ Peng, Tinza Uk, Pers. comm, 17/07/08.

GR reduces these feelings among some members by creating a space where they feel a sense of support, belonging and safety. A forum has been developed where relationships with other students are fostered and members feel that, as Siry affirms, **“someone will listen without judging.”**⁵⁹ As the organisation is student-led, people feel more comfortable about asking for help and support. According to Kuo (Criminology and Sociology student next year, from China, 26 years old), at GR **“it is very easy to make friends with others.”**⁶⁰ Many members, as Dennis states, **“have no other opportunities to meet Kiwi students than this.”**⁶¹

GR is a place where people can develop friendships with other students from a variety of backgrounds and feel welcome no matter where they are from. Mustafa explains, **“I see some people here, I know they think, it's Thursday, I'm going to Global Remix, I'm going to go see people to talk to.”**⁶² For students who are new to New Zealand and still learning English, GR is a safe place to practice speaking and make Kiwi friends. As Kim states about GR, **“first time I come for many English hearing. This time I come because good friends”**⁶³, and for Taw Reh, GR is **“good for me to talk to other students who are native speakers, practice English.”**⁶⁴

As stated earlier, it is clear that the isolation and ‘do it yourself’ mentality that the university environment generates is a significant barrier for RB, migrant and other students. It is important that the university continues to encourage groups like GR to provide support in ways that VUW, at present, does not.

⁵⁹ Ibrahim, Sirelkhatim, Pers. comm, 07/07/08.

⁶⁰ Jia, Kuo, Pers. comm, 24/09/08.

⁶¹ Maang, Dennis, Pers. comm, 17/07/08.

⁶² Sheikh, Mustafa, Pers. comm, 17/07/08.

⁶³ Seok, Kim, Per. comm, 31/07/08.

⁶⁴ Nga, Taw Reh, Pers. comm, 30/09/08.

Club Ethic – Celebration of Diversity

The inclusive, multicultural nature of the club is a central aspect of its identity.

According to Sadiya, **“there’s just not that ‘where’re you from?’ specific to you because everyone is from different places.”**⁶⁵ Members are generally happy to share their backgrounds – not just as refugees, but as people from different places – with interested others. As Sadiya says, **“it’s great, because many students have never met Somali people before, and they find us interesting.”**⁶⁶

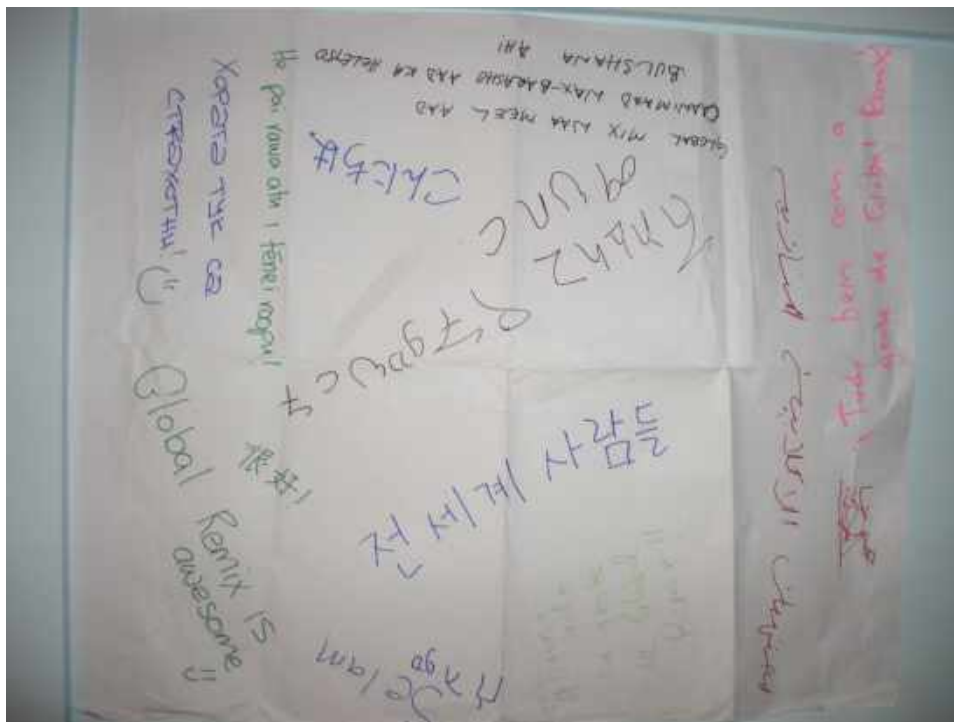


Photo Fifteen: Greetings in different languages written by GR members 2008

In fact, the range of talents and points of view that members bring to the club is one of its greatest strengths - as Gabriel (Information Systems Management student, first year, from the Congo, 29 years old) puts it, GR helps *all* members with **“learning to see**

⁶⁵ Jimale, Sadiya, Pers. comm, 17/07/08.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

differently”⁶⁷ through the interactions they have with others at meetings. Sahra (FS student, from Somalia, 18 years old) says that it is **“good to see different people you can go to, variety of support.”**⁶⁸ Rahma (FS student, from Somalia, 19 years old) appreciates that there are **“lots of different people willing to share knowledge”**⁶⁹ within GR. Pamela (Psychology and Education Studies student, third year, from Zimbabwe, 24 years old) values the **“individual voices”** and that it is **“ok to voice opinions.”**⁷⁰ Siry **“likes meeting new people.”**⁷¹ Will (International Business and Mandarin student, second year, from New Zealand, 21 years old) appreciates that the club **“brings people together from different cultures.”**⁷² And Tom (Masters in Development Studies student, from New Zealand, 21 years old) enjoys **“getting the chance to meet people from backgrounds that I’d never get the chance to meet in other situations.”**⁷³

Events such as the food stall in the Quad (see Photo Thirteen on page 52), when members brought food from their various places of origin, and the end-of-year party, where people dressed in traditional costumes, help encourage this sense that diversity is something to be treasured. In fact, as Koos (Development Studies student, first year, from Somalia, 28 years old) comments, **“this is an ethic that should be embraced by the entire university community – but GR at least represents a start!”**⁷⁴

⁶⁷ Hughes, Gabriel Pers. comm, 20/08/08.

⁶⁸ Farah, Sahra. Pers. comm, 20/08/08.

⁶⁹ Adan, Rahma. Pers. comm, 20/08/08.

⁷⁰ Major, Pamela. Pers. comm, 24/09/08.

⁷¹ Ibrahim, Sirelkhatim, Pers. comm, 24/09/08.

⁷² Hunt, Will, Pers. comm, 24/09/08.

⁷³ Vink, Thomas. Pers. comm, 24/09/08.

⁷⁴ Ali, Koos. Pers. comm, 27/08/08.

In sum, diversity, multiculturalism and a willingness to explore and share differences and similarities are the 'ties that bind' GR. These aspects seem a positive way to attract RB and other students, and are far more effective than focussing on 'refugee-hood' and its associated 'problems'.

Club Ethic – Equity

Promoting diversity as a central aspect of the club's identity has also helped to guarantee equitable practice within GR. Ensuring equity in all processes and functions is fundamental to many members. This was particularly salient at the Inaugural General Meeting (IGM) held in early 2008. Many African members were especially keen to ensure that Asian and female students were elected into official club positions. As Mustafa states, **"we shouldn't let one race dominate."**⁷⁵ While the GEOG 404 team had assumed that affiliating as a club was a mere technicality, other GR members approached the elections seriously and with enthusiasm. Each candidate was asked to give a speech, and GR collaboratively established a confidential voting system and ensured that members who could not make the meeting would also have a chance to vote by email. The process emerged as a key step for the club in establishing its identity. Of course, on reflection, it should perhaps not come as a surprise that RB students would see democratic and inclusive processes as important!



Photo Sixteen: Decorations made by members at the end of year GR party, 15 October 2008

⁷⁵ Sheikh, Mustafa, Pers. comm, 16/05/08.

Being Believed In, Giving Back

It seems that many staff and students at VUW do not genuinely believe that RB students are able to achieve good academic results. As Dennis explains, **“We think people will see us at a lower class because we’re calling ourselves refugees, and asking if we need help.”**⁷⁶ Being believed in is very important to RB students, as it is easy to internalise negative assumptions about oneself and one’s capabilities. Terefe, for example, revealed the surprise he felt upon starting university and seeing **“Africans, refugees, migrants [attending the university]... makes you rethink again.”**⁷⁷



Photo Seventeen: Tom, Siry, Dennis and Monica at the end of year GR party, 15 October 2008

According to Osman, **“Global Remix is the first (THING) that believed in us and believed that we can actually do it, no matter what (IT) should refer to.”**⁷⁸ Osman says

⁷⁶ Maang, Dennis, Pers. comm, 17/07/08.

⁷⁷ Ejigu, Terefe, Pers. comm, 17/07/08.

⁷⁸ Osman, Osman, Pers. comm, 20/09/08.

that many RB students feel like the effort they put into university often goes unappreciated because of low expectations of them: **“we used to work so hard and half of what we had done had just gone on the air.”**⁷⁹

As already stated, it is obvious that RB students do not want to be recognised as victims. Osman explains that organisations in New Zealand try to help, but don’t appreciate their ability and desire to ‘give back’ to the community and this country: **“We don’t want to live here off other people’s charity for the rest of our lives. We want to give back, and they think we are incapable of it.”**⁸⁰

Therefore, making an effort to recognise that *everybody* has strengths and capabilities - that they are able to use in directing their *own* lives - is very important. GR is a way of building up this belief amongst students by providing realistic role models and encouraging students to help one another so that everybody is giving *and* getting something back. Muntaz sums up this point of view: **“we should ... not underestimate the different skills people bring here, we all have different skills.”**⁸¹ As Osman asserts, **“we are ok now. But our other brothers and sisters still need some help.”**⁸²

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 24/05/08.

⁸¹ Jimale, Muntaziyah, Pers. comm, 24/07/08.

⁸² Osman, Osman, Pers. comm, 25/06/08.

Stories: Members' Experiences in Global Remix



Photo Eighteen: Dennis and Terefe at a GR meeting, 8th May 2008



Osman Osman

Philosophy student,
24 years old,
from Sudan

We can write detailed books about how long one should be refugees for, and the debate about all issues around this line can go on and on. But what I think to be the case is that we have signed a social contract with a wider community in New Zealand and that to be fair we should actualize our abilities and contribute to the wider community.

By the look of what we have been going through, and taking my disappointment on studylink and organisations that we have in our daily life into account, I do not think that it has been easy for us to comply with what we consider to be fair, given the fact that the development in our community has been running in a low level of development. By that I mean the abilities to get our entitlement, but we do not seem to have moved into a higher level of development as to be able to perform our duties toward our community, and the wider community. Duties such as offering whatever we are able to offer.

Given the fact that students have different needs, I think the club is one thing that we have always needed. For us to develop ourselves, we have needed to have a place where we sit together, talk about the problems and find possible solutions and go for it. That seems to be one way for us to be able to actualize our academic abilities and move forward to a higher level of development. Development that would enable us to help ourselves, families, friends and all community members.

Academics and services around the university, friends and families seem to be keen to help, but one problem I have found in my experience here is that each one of them individually is not as efficient as when you put all these pits and pieces together on one plate.

I think the club might be the plate to put these pits and piece together. and that this club is capable of producing citizens who would break the vicious circles that their communities have always been facing.



Dennis Maang

Foundation
Studies
student,
32 years
old, from
Myanmar

My Club: Global Remix

I am new to New Zealand. I had arrived Wellington on 1 March 2008. I took an English Proficiency Program which was started on 10 March 2008. As a refugee, I have 2 volunteer support workers who were helping me for everything I need to do to settle in Wellington. They help me for everything from the smallest things such as showing me where to buy rice to the biggest things such as dealing officials on behalf of me. They are very helpful but there is one thing that they cannot help me and that is the most important things for me. That is to make me feel myself at home at Victoria University. To make me feel I was included therefore I have my confidence and manage to concentrate on my study.

My classmates and my teachers are very kind, supportive and good to me but I still feeling something incomplete. Fortunately, the solution to my problem was sent by GOD. It was the club of refugee background students groups: Global Remix. I still need to improve to get back to the right track of my own but I realised that Global Remix make me feel secure and it gives me warmth. It will not make sense if you are not experiencing yourself but believe me as I am experiencing by myself, such a small involvement, activity and recognition really have a huge impact on the future of a person who starting a new life in the new country where he has no single friends or family members at all at the start.

Global Remix is helpful to me because I met new friends of various ranges of background and I can learn and practice my language skill. I can imagine the situation of communication skill and got an idea to improve. Global Remix reminds me my golden time back at home at my home country and also my role as a youth leader in my parish. Global Remix gives back me the enthusiasm to rebuild my life as that youthful strength, confidence and optimism for life. Can you believe that Global Remix is one of the reasons that I don't want to leave Victoria University of Wellington? Yes! It really is. Thanks to the members of postgraduate students who are working tirelessly for the club and members. I much appreciate the members of the club who are not from refugee background because you all have no hesitation to see refugees as the same as you and that is the main resource of energy and confidence for us. In the future, I wish Global Remix will become a club of unity and helping every student academically and socially.



Kuo Jia

Will study
Criminology
and Sociology
next year, 26 years
old, from China

As a refugee student so far from home, I really need some good friends and integrate into New Zealand society. The Global Remix Club (Refugee club) provided a very good place for me to make friends and keep in touch with them. The GRC is a good way to communicate with different nationality students. The GRC is like a big family. The members share their joys and sorrows, and help each other, like brothers and sisters. I have learnt different cultures and I practiced my English at this club. I really appreciate Caroline, Sarah, Monica, Tom and other friends spent much time to arrange every meeting for us. I will treasure this happy environment.

I really enjoy being member of global remix. I have learnt many culture, and met very nice persons. First time I was shy, but Kiwi volunteer students help me to get into the club. If you willing to meet very nice people and learn other culture, join the global remix.



Kim Seok

Accounting Student, from South Korea



Terefe Ejigu

Development Studies
and Psychology student,
19 years old, from Ethiopia

For a first year university student like me Global Remix is a great place to be. I always wanted to be part of a club that celebrates diversity, different people from all over the world with one thing in common, and that is Global Remix. I think Global Remix is a place of: learning, fun, sharing and communication.

I found that all the people that come to Global Remix are smart and friendly. There are thousands of students at Victoria University, and for someone like me with little knowledge about University; things can be very hard, not only have I to study I also have to make friends to survive the University life. Global Remix has opened that gate for me; through Global remix I was able to meet different people from different backgrounds. I feel more comfortable around University now because of Global Remix.

Monica, Tom and Caroline are amazing, they have always said yes to me whenever I needed help with my essays. They are very cool, understanding and easy to get along. They have been the glue that holds the club for this long.

I recommend Global Remix to anyone to join, because the people you meet are very friendly, can help you with your study and make life at university easier.



Mustafa Sheikh

Political Science
and International
Relations student,
25 years old,
from Somalia

Global Remix (GR), the name says it all: mixing and uniting students from all corners of the globe. Global Remix has played a vital role in assuring that many migrant and international students settled well in Victoria University. GR has been more than an academic support for many students. Rather, it has been a place where they made friends, voiced their concerns and knew help and support was available if they needed. From my personal experience, it has been a pleasure seeing the smiling faces of students from diverse ethnic-backgrounds who shared their unique stories, cultures and experiences. It sometimes felt like the entire world was brought together under one roof; in other words, united in one small room.

Firstly, I would like to thank Thomas- the great listener; Caroline- gee your awesome girl and Monica- funny, lively and energetic. I know this was part of your course experiments, but it (your experiment) has now created a legacy that appears to get bigger and stronger everyday. You were all amazing and the club will miss you. Secondly, many thanks to everyone else who either took part in organising GR or attended the meetings.

I wish you all glorious inner and outer success in accomplishing what is important in your lives.

Anna Ravendran



Development Studies and
International Relations
student, 19 years old,
from Britain

When first hearing about Global Remix a couple of months ago, I thought it sounded like an interesting group but, I was worried that it was a little late in the year to join, and that everyone would already know each other. However, after attending the Global Remix Training Day, I found everyone was really friendly and supportive of each other. Global Remix has some awesome members! The thing I love the most is how people from different backgrounds get to interact and have fun. I'm looking forward for what Global Remix has in store for 2009!

Sarah Gray

Anthropology Honours
student, 22 years old,
from New
Zealand

Being involved in Global Remix for the last few months of this year has been a fun experience. I have really enjoyed meeting new people, especially because the people that I am meeting are keen to meet new people as well. The enthusiasm of the people I have met has been amazing, both in their personal lives as well as their enthusiasm to ensure that the club continues. I hope that the momentum that the club has gathered continues, so that Global Remix is able to foster a sense of belonging for many more people.



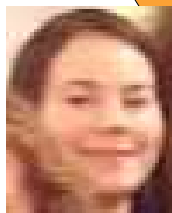
Anthropology
Honours
student,
23 years
old, from
Hungary

Mariska Kecskemeti

My experiences with Global
Remix (GR) have been a very
enjoyable one. I became involved
in the club by signing up on Clubs

Day in the second semester. I
joined to gain different
experiences and meet with other
students of the university that I
wouldn't ordinarily meet. As a
non-refugee background student, I
was not expecting to get academic
and social support from GR
(although the workshops from
Career Services were helpful to
me too!), but to give it to others. I

have made new friends and
hopefully my input during the
workshops, planning events and
making fliers/invitations was
useful to others and helps promote
the club to future refugee
background students. I look
forward to GR running long into
the future.



Sadiya Jimale

Bio-medicine student,
from Somalia

My experience at Global Remix GR: for a club that had only been established at the beginning of the year, Global Remix had tremendous growth in such a short time. There are so many things I liked about GR, to name few, I enjoyed coming to the weekly meetings and getting to know the other members, the most awesome thing about GR is meeting people from different nationalities, hearing their stories and experience. I also enjoyed how the club provided useful information for us as tertiary student and the guest speakers who came along and offered us a workshops such as time management. Lastly I would like to thank Caroline, Monica and Thomas for their hard work making GR friendly and pleasant environment. Good luck for the future guyz.

Discussion and Conclusion

As this report aims to show, the process of forming and developing GR has been extremely worthwhile for the majority of people involved. This account of the process will also serve as a valuable point of reference about RB students at VUW for students and staff.

But, is that as far as its relevance goes? Or are there wider lessons to be learned?

Broader literature on RB people and immigrants more generally holds significant connections with the findings and stories in this report. There are also parallels with some literature on youth (although, as explained in ‘Painting a Picture: What is Global Remix?’ not all students in GR can be classified as youth under standard definitions.)

Regarding identity, the 2006 VUW research similarly acknowledged the label ‘refugee’ as restrictive for RB students.⁸³ A Canadian study by Kilbride and Anisef on ‘newcomer’ (recent immigrant) youth confirmed that their needs are, in fact, “as diverse as their circumstances and experiences.”⁸⁴

There is much in the literature that mirrors *Learning to See Differently*’s findings regarding the disconnection between many RB students and support services. Kilbride and Anisef note that “there is a striking disparity between what key informants say is available ... and what each group of youth has found accessible.”⁸⁵ The Department of

⁸³ Horner et al (2006) p. 12.

⁸⁴ Kilbride, Kenise Murphy and Paul Anisef. (2001) ‘To Build on Hope: Overcoming the Challenges faced by Newcomer Youth at Risk in Ontario, Canada’, submitted to the Ontario Administration of Settlement and Integration Services, October, p. 18.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 35.

Labour's report – *Refugee Voices*⁸⁶ – and the 2006 VUW study⁸⁷ report similar findings for RB people in New Zealand.

On the theme of 'good intentions', PD and PAR writings have much to say about projects and research aimed at marginalised people. According to Freire, research that truly helps oppressed people "must be forged *with*, not *for*, them."⁸⁸ They must be active participants in research processes, and not merely have knowledge imparted on them by well-meaning outsiders.⁸⁹ Importantly, in New Zealand, refugee communities have also stipulated that they "want to be *active participants* [emphasis added] in policy development and service delivery"⁹⁰ that affects them.

The feelings of isolation that many members of GR reported at university correspond with the findings of a Wellington study in 2005 - *African Youth Health and Well-Being*.⁹¹ It stated that participants felt isolated and marginalised at secondary school, and that teachers and schools were not aware or accepting of their needs.⁹² Furthermore, in *Refugee Voices*, fewer than half of refugees interviewed, after two years and five years

⁸⁶ Dunstan et al. p. 21.

⁸⁷ Horner et al. p. 20.

⁸⁸ Freire, Paolo, cited in Liz Charles and Neil Ward (2007) 'Generating Change through Research: Action Research and its Implications', Centre for Rural Economy Discussion Paper Series No. 10, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, January, p. 4.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 4.

⁹⁰ 'Standards for Engagement – Guidelines for Central and Local Government, and NGOs working with Refugee Background Communities', ChangeMakers Refugee Forum, March 2008, p. i.

⁹¹ King, Monique, Nicholas Newman, Kate Satterthwaite, Emily Thompson, Jacqueline Wenham, with Yordanos Gebre, Ahmed Osman, Mohamed Osman (2005) *African Youth Health and Well-being: Participatory Action Research Project*, Research Report, School of Geography Environment and Earth Sciences, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington.

⁹² Ibid, p. 10.

in New Zealand, felt it had been easy to make friends outside their ethnic group.⁹³

Participants in the VUW 2006 study also spoke of the difficulties they had “fitting in”.⁹⁴

Regarding a need for connectedness, in *Refugee Voices* it is emphasised that having a social network outside of one’s family and ethnic community is very important to RB people. This can help them to combat problems they may face during resettlement.⁹⁵

The vast majority of participants in *Refugee Voices* were keen to learn about New Zealand culture, to help them understand other New Zealanders and integrate more easily.⁹⁶ Likewise, in *Learning to See Differently*, several members’ stories mentioned the importance of meeting Kiwi students and being in an environment where it is easy to make friends and find support.

Being believed in – or not – also emerged as a strong theme in various reports. As Fangen comments, refugees often “find that their competence is not recognized, and they are instead reduced to being only this, a refugee.”⁹⁷ The 2005 VUW study with African youth found that negative assumptions in New Zealand about African people’s learning ability, trustworthiness, and financial security de-motivate these young people and impede their success in education.⁹⁸ The 2006 VUW study showed that several students were keen to ‘give back’, both to their ethnic and wider communities in New

⁹³ Dunstan et al., p. 29.

⁹⁴ Horner et al., p. 21.

⁹⁵ Dunstan et al., p. 29.

⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 31.

⁹⁷ Fangen, Katrine (2006) ‘Humiliation Experienced by Somali Refugees in Norway’, *Journal of Refugee Studies* 19(1), p. 70.

⁹⁸ King et al, p. 10.

Zealand, and to their countries of origin.⁹⁹ However, it also noted the “low academic ambition”¹⁰⁰ amongst participants.

The strong appreciation of cultural diversity within the club is also paralleled by comments in *Refugee Voices* such as: “I want to keep my culture, but I want to learn to live and learn New Zealand culture as well. It’s good to learn about New Zealand’s different cultures.”¹⁰¹ Many teenagers in this study mentioned that they liked having the opportunity to make friends at a multi-cultural school.¹⁰² What is more, the majority of RB people interviewed in the study – like those in GR - were very proud of their own cultures and thought it was important to maintain cultural practices in New Zealand and share them with others.¹⁰³

So, if *Learning to See Differently*’s findings share so much common ground with other research, what makes this report useful beyond VUW? We (the GEOG 404 team) believe that its significance lies not in the issues we have identified, but rather in the ways in which GR is learning to deal with them. This is what comes out strongly in the themes and stories presented here – not simply the problems people face, but the solutions they are collectively developing.

This raises a real challenge to more ‘traditional’ research; to ideals of objectively analysing the ‘problems’ of others and denying one’s own agency in, and impact on, the research process. Such a standpoint can allow researchers to shirk responsibility for how they represent people ‘in the name of truth’. As this report has shown, stereotyping and not being believed in is already an issue for RB people. It is concerning, then, that

⁹⁹ Horner et al., p. 13.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 14.

¹⁰¹ ‘Afghan teenager’, cited in Dunstan et al., p. 292.

¹⁰² Dunstan et al., p. 29.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 31.

Refugee Voices, a widely-disseminated report, contains somewhat damning conjectures about RB people, presented as fact. For example, the report states that “*As could be expected* [emphasis added], employment rates were low for all participants”¹⁰⁴ and “On the evidence of this research, some may never get to the place where they can participate in this country’s life to the same extent as other residents.”¹⁰⁵ Even if the writer believes this to be an accurate statement about the RB people they are discussing, it is difficult to see what purpose is served by publishing such remarks.

We also realised that researching - *and* dealing with - issues in a holistic manner seemed more effective than trying to separate them out and address them discretely, as more conventional research might encourage. As Osman puts it in his story on page 61,

“one problem I have found in my experience here is that each one of them [means of support] individually is not as not efficient as when you put all these pits and pieces together on one plate.”

Guerin et al. comment that their similar findings regarding the necessity of researching holistically with Somali communities in Hamilton suggest “some theoretical considerations about the very possibility of doing traditional forms of research in these areas.”¹⁰⁶ Our experiences – gaining key insights from holistic, embedded research, and realising how inappropriate ‘traditional research’ could be - point to the same conclusion.

We hope that this report has demonstrated, above all, that ‘researching’ and ‘helping create positive change’ can be entirely enmeshed in one another. We believe, therefore, that this journey is of interest, and hopefully of use, to people working and/or

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, p. 26.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 33.

¹⁰⁶ Guerin et al, (2002), p. 119.

‘researching’ with other people – particularly those defined as outside the cultural, ethnic and/or linguistic norms in the institutional settings they inhabit.



Photo Nineteen: Fuad, Tom and Kuo at the end of year GR party, 15 October 2008



Photo Twenty: Caroline, Monica, Dennis and Tom's feet, GR bowling trip, 24 June 2008



Recommendations

These are for individuals and organisations involved with RB students at VUW.

Other Students

- Quite simply, get involved. Be friendly; get to know refugee-background students and other students from different places – through Global Remix, or in your daily life. Being hopeless at introducing ourselves doesn't have to be a Kiwi tradition.

Lecturers and Tutors

- Don't single out RB students as refugees in lectures or tutorials. Remember that this is only one facet of their identities.
- Regularly promote and publicise support services in lectures and tutorials.
- Encourage RB students to make appointments and attend office hours for more personal and one-on-one support.
- Take a personal interest in RB students outside of lectures and tutorials.
- Become aware of the diversity in your classrooms. Whatever you say in a class about any group of people, you should be able to say to those people directly.
- Believe in RB students and their ability to achieve!

Staff Network

- Campaign for a designated study space for GR on campus.
- Raise staff awareness about RB students at VUW and how best to support them, both in your everyday interactions and through targeted workshops.

- Take a personal interest in RB students.
- Run workshops with GR.
- Allow the club to remain student-led. But, work as advocates and champions for GR in the wider university environment.

EPP, FS, SLS

- Maintain clear lines of communication between different services.
- Keep providing personalised and one-on-one services and support.
- Ensure the consistent provision of accurate and accessible information about your programmes to RB communities and students.

Vice-Chancellor

- Keep supporting the staff network and GR.
- Provide a dedicated study space that the club can make its own.

Studylink

- Encourage staff to show patience and empathy towards students, especially those who are not native English speakers.
- Take a more personal approach towards RB students. Assign specific case workers.
- Offer workshops at GR meetings.



Looking Forward

In this section, tips are provided for current and future members of GR to ensure the club maintains its momentum. Then, suggestions are given for students interested in setting up and running a club similar to GR at other universities. Many points appear in both subsections.

These tips are intended as inspiration, not instructions. It is recognised that the context you work in will be different from GR's this year. Perhaps the most important tip of all, then, is Osman's:

"Take it easy and don't rush... When [people] have millions of ideas, jumping from one to another, just want things to happen now, that will not help people. Take it easy, just respect each other."¹⁰⁷



Photo Twenty One: (from left to right) Back Row: Shayne, Tom, Keynes, Mariska, Sara, Dennis, Kuo, Abdi, Yasin, Dagaga; Middle Row: Fuad, Yusuf, Teresa, Sarah, Mariska, Diane, Ummi, Liban; Front Row: Siry, Monica, Terefe, Caroline, Koos, Sabrina at the end of year GR party, 15 October 2008

¹⁰⁷ Osman, Osman, Pers. comm., 30/9/08.

Tips for current and future members of Global Remix at VUW

- **Take a participatory approach.** This has meant for the GEOG 404 team, on a day-to-day level, being aware of power dynamics within and beyond GR: whose voices are heard and silenced, who makes key decisions, who decides agendas; and working to make club processes as equitable as possible.
- **Have regular meetings at convenient times.** It is important that members know for certain when and where the club is meeting each week. Be aware that FS and EPP students have many contact hours, so are less flexible than other students regarding the time meetings are held. Try to accommodate these students as much as possible, as this is where many members will be studying.
- **Bring food to meetings and events.** Sharing food is a great way to build relationships. Some students may have particular food requirements, such as halal, which is food permitted according to the Qur'an – please contact the Muslim Students' Association of VUW (see page 102) for more information. Change Makers Refugee Forum (see page 107) can put you in contact with RB people who cater for club events and can usually provide halal food. This is a nice way to make connections with the wider RB community.
- **Send out frequent reminders via phone, email and text message.** This way, people stay connected to the group even if they are unable to attend all meetings, and are reminded that support is available. Phone seems the most effective, personal way to keep in touch, but is time-consuming. Email is useful for sending out meeting minutes, but is easily ignored, and can be difficult for students for whom English is a challenge. Text messages are good for last-minute reminders.
- **Keep contact details up-to-date.** The GEOG 404 team has constructed a database of members' details, which the secretary should frequently check and add to.

- **Be flexible.** Expect that people will show up late, and that some people will want help with study, while others want a chance to socialise. Having several ‘facilitators’ at meetings is helpful so that different needs can be attended to simultaneously.
- **Keep up-to-date with university administrative processes such as AGMs.** Take them seriously, and make sure all members are on board with and able to participate in these. This can include allowing members to participate in club decision making both in person and by email, and allowing enough time for everyone to have their say. Administration can turn out to be more interesting than you think!
- **Share club members’ areas of expertise.** This helps to encourage informal mentoring between members. Make sure they know how to get in touch with each other and if all members are comfortable, make the clubs contact details available to members.
- **Set short, medium and long-term goals for the club.** These will change, but they help to give the club a sense of purpose and achievement. GR’s goals, as of August 2008, are displayed in Table Two in the section “Painting a Picture: what is Global Remix?”
- **Meet during university breaks.** Do something fun and social – just to keep the energy going and help the group to keep feeling connected.
- **Outreach to schools.** Let RB high school students know that support is available to them at VUW through GR. This can be done through schools themselves or through community networks, such as youth groups and churches.
- **Run:**
 - Workshops.** Invite people from other university – or external – institutions to run workshops on practical things like essay-writing and job applications. Aside from benefiting from the workshop itself, members also meet a ‘familiar face’ in these institutions, and are likely to feel more comfortable seeking help there in the future. We found that there are many VUW staff members willing to lead workshops.

Cultural stalls. GR's food stall in the university Quad was a great way for members to share positive aspects of their cultures. It spread the word about GR and helped members feel more connected to the wider university environment. The stall also attracted new members and raised money.

Treasure hunts! Some members of GR marked places around the university where students can get help, like the offices of friendly lecturers and different student services. GR split into groups and, with the help of clues, found where these places were. The first group to arrive back after finding all the places won chocolate. This is a fun way for students to orient themselves and get to know useful services and supportive staff around the university.

Icebreakers. They might sound childish, but they work! These games get people energised and help them to feel comfortable with each other. See Robert Chambers book, *Participatory workshops : a sourcebook of 21 sets of ideas and activities*,¹⁰⁸ for some excellent suggestions.

Pair interviewing sessions. This helps encourage interaction and relationship-building within the group, and gives people a chance to practise their English and listening skills.

Sports teams. The GR indoor soccer team was a nice way for members to de-stress and 'hang out' in a non-academic environment, and an opportunity to celebrate some different talents within the group.

A website. Unfortunately, GR did not get one up and running this year, but it seems a logical way to enhance the club's visibility and accessibility. Hopefully this will be getting set up over the summer break. A facebook page may be a

¹⁰⁸ Chambers, Robert (2002) *Participatory workshops : a sourcebook of 21 sets of ideas and activities*, Earthscan Publications, London.

good intermediary step, and an easy way for members to keep in touch, even when they are overseas or have finished university.

- **Make a Global Remix 'mix' CD.** Music has been a really positive way for GR members to share their culture with others. Making a CD with music from around the world, representing different GR members, would be a great way for members to learn more about each other.

- **An end-of-year celebration.** This is a great way to get people together and celebrate the achievements of the club and its members. This year, GR gave out personalised certificates and chocolate bars to all the members who had been along to a meeting. GR t-shirts were also printed for members who had been elected to official positions. Food, music and dancing make the night enjoyable for everyone and give a chance for members to wind down after a busy year.



Photo Twenty Two: (from left to right) Terefe, Monica, Fuad, Caroline and Tom at the end of year GR party, 15 October 2008

Suggestions for students at other universities aiming to set up and run a club similar to Global Remix

- **Seek support from academic and other staff members.** It helps a lot to have academic and general staff on your side, as support people and champions for the club in the wider university environment.

- **Affiliate as an official university club.** This usually gives you easier access to university resources such as vans, DVD players and funding. It can make it much simpler to book meeting rooms and hold stalls, and also helps raise the profile of the club through being listed on university websites and in student guides. Make sure you fully understand the club affiliation process. Be prepared for a range of administrative hurdles, but remember that doing this makes things much easier as the club expands.

- **Collect contact details.** Email, mobile phone number, home phone number, home address and major are useful. Make sure you get these for all members and interested people. Without correct details it can be very difficult and time-consuming to track them down again.

- **Book a space to hold regular meetings at convenient times.** It is important that meetings are held at both a regular time and location, so each week members know for certain when and where the club is meeting. Attendance may be low some weeks, but as time goes by the club will build momentum. Check in with the university's student association about how to book a meeting space.

- **Bring food and drink to meetings and events:** Sharing food is a great way to build relationships between people. It is important to keep in mind that some students may have particular food requirements, such as food which is halal.

- **Nominate a secretary.** It's really important to have someone committed to taking minutes at meetings and sending these out, keeping track of contact details, and responding to individual requests and inquiries from students.

- **Send out frequent reminders via phone, email and text message.** This way, people stay connected to the group even if they are unable to make all the meetings, and are reminded that support is available. Phone is the most effective, personal way to keep in touch, but is time-consuming. Email is useful for sending out meeting minutes, but is easily ignored, and can be difficult for students for whom English is a challenge. Text messages are good for last-minute reminders.

- **Set short, medium and long-term goals for the club.** These will change, but they help to give the club a sense of purpose and achievement.

- **Design a club logo.** You can use this on things like posters and t-shirts, to get people talking about the club. It's great if a design-minded member can come up with some simple designs, and members can decide together which one they would like to represent the club.

- **Take a participatory approach.** This means, on a day-to-day level, being aware of power dynamics within and beyond the group: whose voices are heard and silenced, who makes key decisions, who decides agendas; and working to make club processes as equitable as possible.

- **Be flexible.** Expect that people will show up late, and that some people will want help with study, while others want a chance to socialise. Having several 'facilitators' at meetings is helpful so that different needs can be attended to simultaneously.

- **Run:**

A stall at a university Clubs Day, orientation or similar event. This helps to increase the visibility of the club.

Workshops. Invite people from other university – or external – institutions and services to run workshops on practical things like essay-writing and job applications. Aside from benefiting from the workshop itself, members also meet a 'familiar face' in these institutions, and are likely to feel more comfortable

seeking help there in the future. It also gets the word out about the club to organisations and services, who can refer people on to the club.

Cultural stalls. A food stall at the university is a great way for members to share positive aspects of their cultures. It spreads the word about the club and helps members feel more connected to the wider university environment. It can attract new members and raise money. Make sure you check in with the university's students' association that it's ok for your group to set up a stall.

Treasure hunts! Mark places around the university where students can get help, like the offices of friendly lecturers and different student services. Split into groups and, with the help of clues, find where these places are. The first group to arrive back after finding all the places wins a prize. This is a fun way for students to orient themselves and get to know useful services and supportive staff around the university.

Icebreakers. They might sound childish, but they work! These games get people energised and help them to feel comfortable with each other. See Robert Chambers book, *Participatory workshops : a sourcebook of 21 sets of ideas and activities*¹⁰⁹, for some excellent suggestions.

Sports teams. Sports teams are a nice way for members to de-stress and 'hang out' in a non-academic environment, and an opportunity to celebrate some different talents within the group.

- **Send the word out through existing networks.** Many GR members were first introduced to the club through friends, lecturers and Student Learning Support (SLS).

¹⁰⁹ Chambers, Robert (2002).

- **Outreach to schools.** Let RB high school students know that support is available to them at university through the club. This can be done through schools themselves or through community networks, such as youth groups, mosques and churches.

-**An end of year celebration.** This is a great way to get members together and celebrate the achievements of the club and its members. Food, music and dancing make the night enjoyable for everyone and allow members to wind down after a busy year.



Photo Twenty Three: Mustafa, Caroline, Tom, Siry and Monica at the end of year GR party, 15 October 2008

Appendices

Appendix One: Body maps drawn by GR members in a meeting on the 8th May 2008

Photo Twenty One: 'A Good Mentor'

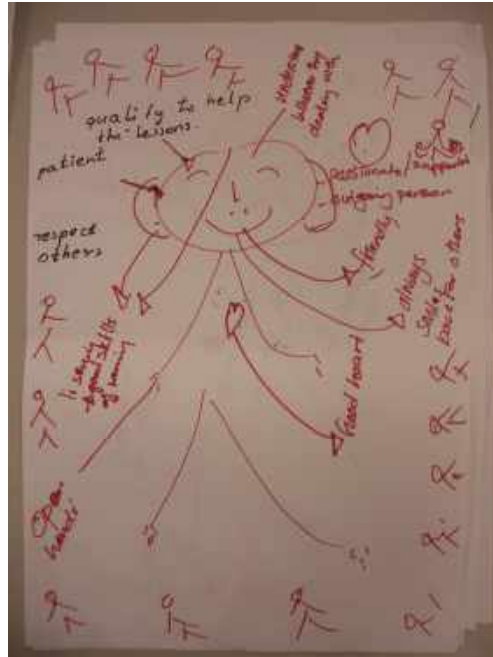


Photo Twenty Two: 'A Bad Mentor'

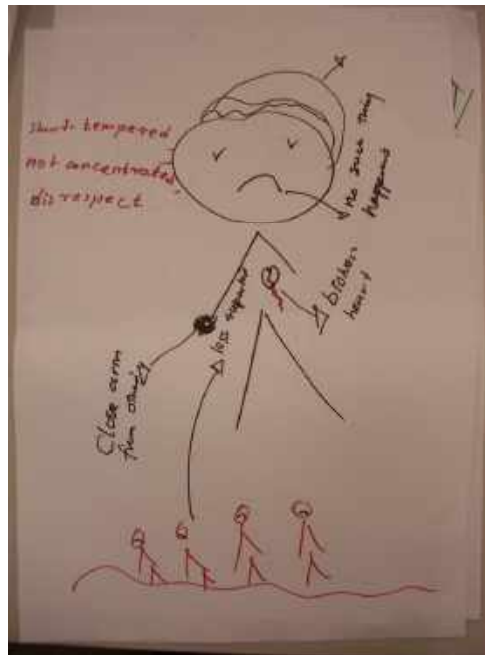


Photo Twenty Three: 'A Good Mentor'



Photo Twenty Four: 'A Bad Mentor'

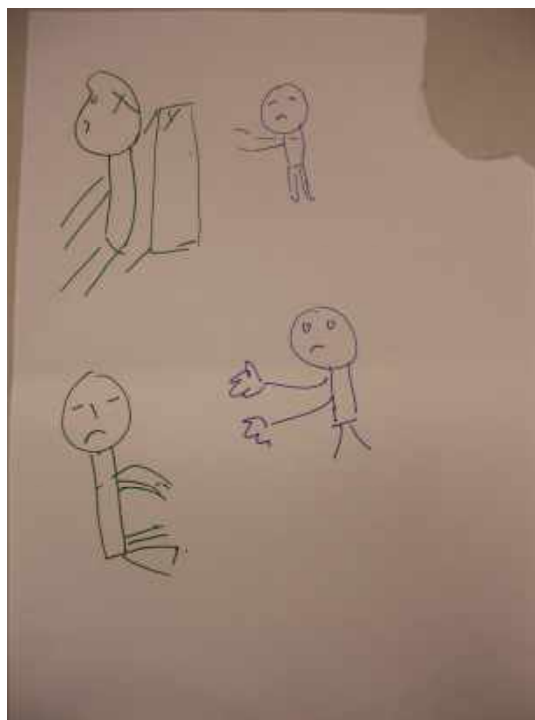


Photo Twenty Five: 'A Good Mentor'



Photo Twenty Six: 'A Bad Mentor'



Photo Twenty Seven: 'A Good Mentor'



Photo Twenty Eight: 'A Bad Mentor'



Appendix Two: Additional Data

Chart Four: Ages of GR Members

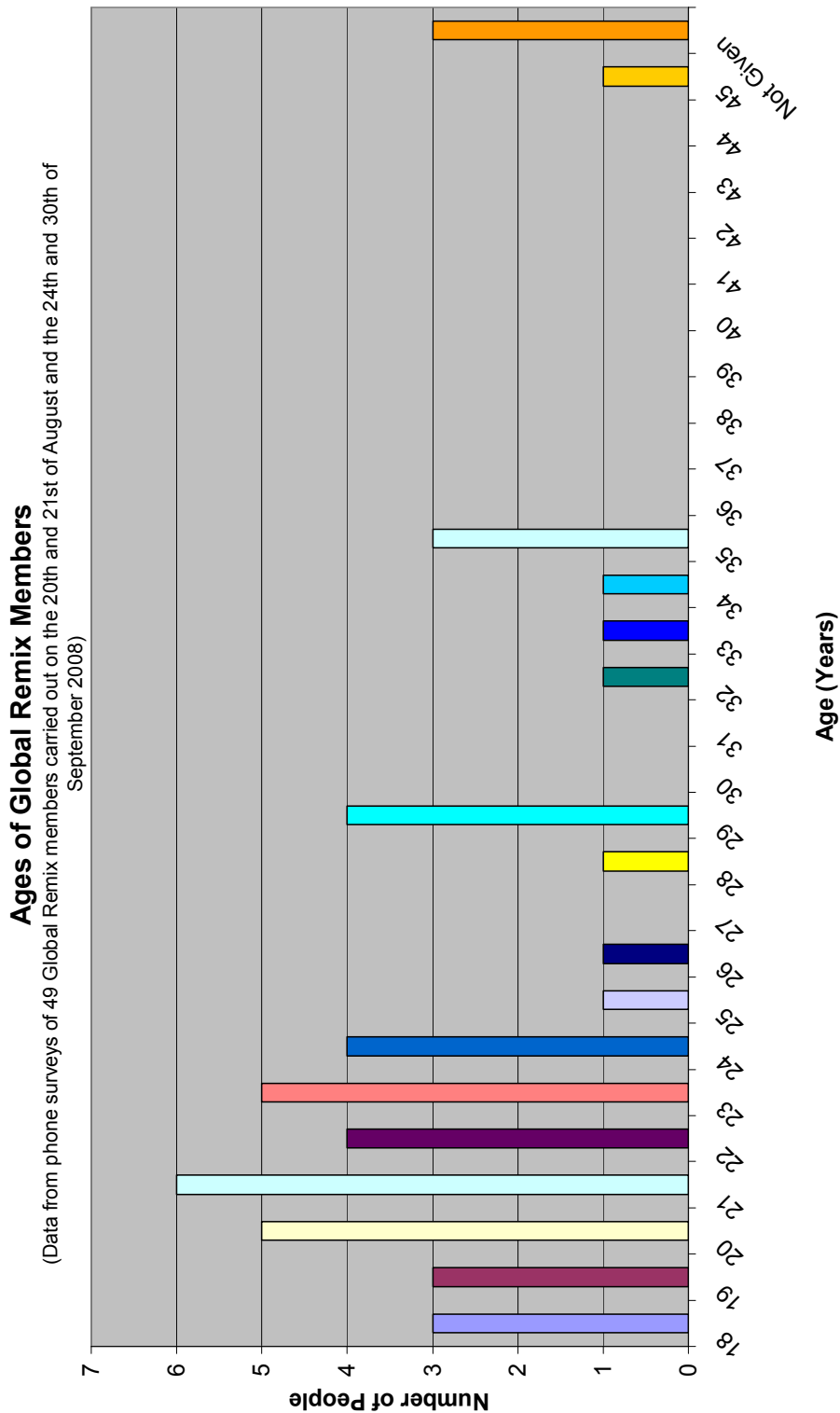


Chart Five: Where GR Members go for Study Help

Where Global Remix Members go for Study Help
(Data from phone surveys of 49 Global Remix members carried out on the 20th and 21st of August and the 24th and 30th of September 2008)

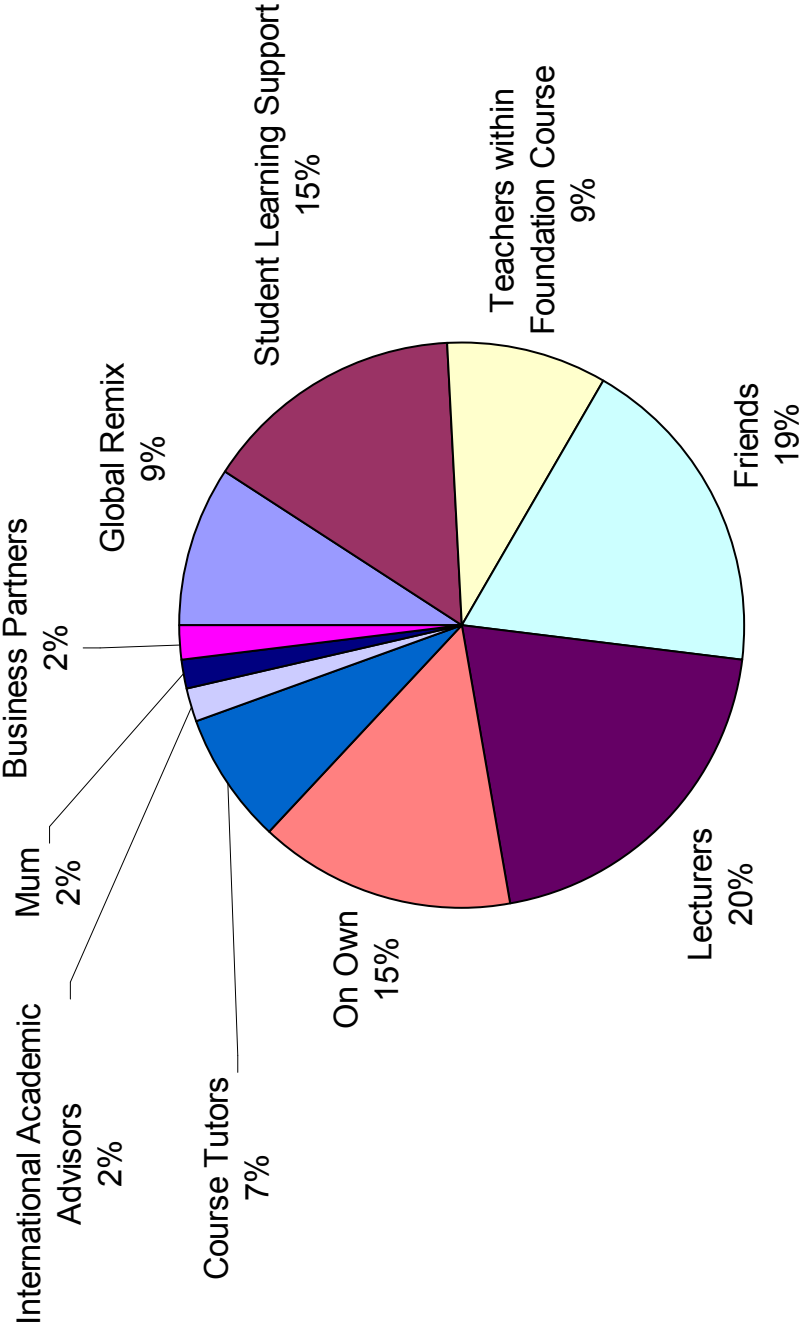
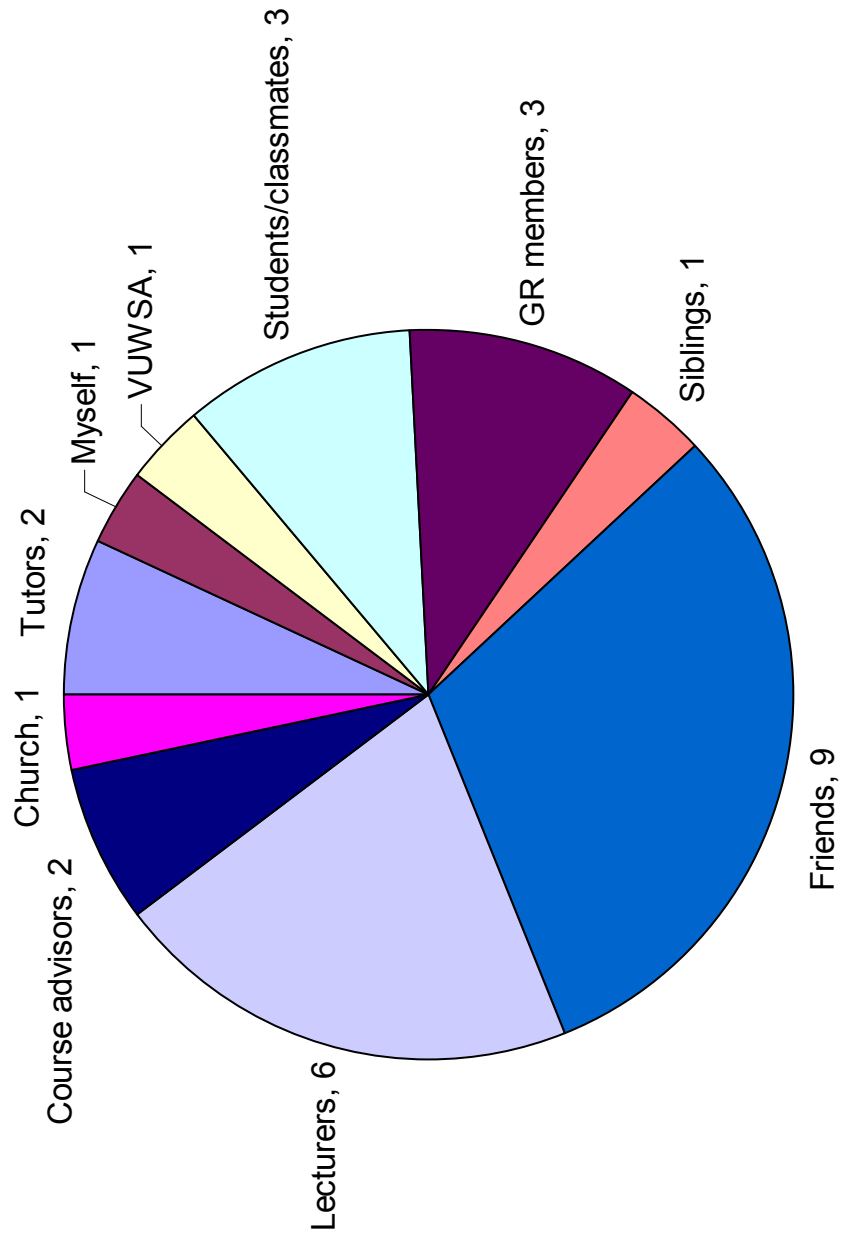


Chart Six: Who Makes GR Members Feel 'At Home' at University

Who makes Global Remix members feel 'at home' at University

(Data taken from a Global Remix brainstorm with 14 members on 17th July 2008. Figures indicate the frequency at which the service or person was suggested)



Appendix Three: Timeline of Global Remix Activities, 27 March – 15 October 2008

Thursday 27 March – Welcoming Event for Refugee Background (RB) students in Student Learning Support (SLS)

Wednesday 9 April – First VUW RB mentoring meeting in SLS.

Wednesday 16 April – RB support services meeting. Monica, Tom and Caroline offer to have study times each week in the library. Decision made to form a club to support RB students.

Friday 2 May – First meeting with RB students facilitated by GEOG 404 team. Come up with name – ‘Global Remix’.

Thursday 8 May – Second meeting with RB students. Body mapping.

Thursday 22 May – GR IGM.

Thursday 29 May – GR treasure hunt, so that people get a chance to find out where helpful people/services are.

Tuesday 24 June – GR bowling trip.

Wednesday 25 June – Monica and Tom write article for Ministry of Youth Affairs magazine – ‘12-24’ – about GR.

Wednesday 9 July – Hold a stall on Clubs day. Sign up lots of new members.

Thursday 10 July – GR meeting, set up soccer team.

Thursday 17 July – GEOG 404 team runs formal research session with GR group.

Monday 21 July – Caroline, Monica and Tom have a “breakthrough” in terms of club and mentoring programme, the club is in fact acting as an informal mentoring programme for many members and a formal one-on-one programme may not be appropriate at this time.

Thursday 24 July – Have first meeting in clubs room of student union building. Had to move because best time for Global Remix was too late for SLS.

Thursday 31 July – Anna Stoyanova from Red Cross talks to members at a GR meeting. The Red Cross were looking to fund a project/event for RB youth, such as a sports team. Come up with idea of holding a food stall in the quad. What is

Global Remix? Sentence made, on the suggestion of Terefe – leads to the generation of the text for the VUW New Student Guide entry.

Tuesday 12 August – Global Remix food stall in the quad.

Wednesday 20 and Thursday 21 August – Caroline and Tom carry out phone survey of GR members.

Wednesday 27 August – GR training day with Sara

Thursday 4 September – Start planning end of year party and handing over roles for next year

Thursday 11 September – Mary Roberts (SLS) runs a workshop for GR about time management.

Sunday 14 September – Tom goes to Ethiopian New Year party. Invited by Terefe.

Wednesday 24 September – Monica and Tom do some more phone surveys of GR members.

Thursday 25 September – AGM for GR. Elect new positions – Siry as President, Muntaz as vice-President, Terefe as secretary, Kuo as Treasurer, Mustafa as Cultural Council Representative

Friday 26 September – Monica and Tom go to Ramadan feast at Kilbirnie Mosque.

Sunday 28 September – Monica, Tom, Kim, Stu and Amelia go to Kuo and Jia's house for dinner.

Tuesday 30 September – Monica and Tom do some more phone surveys of GR members

Thursday 2 October – Millie Douglas from Career Services talks to GR.

Thursday 9 October – Final GR meeting of the year. Sort out stuff for end of year party.

Monday 13 October – Monica, Tom, Caroline and Osman talk with Sara about trying to get Global Remix started at Canterbury University

Wednesday 15 October – GR end of year party!

Appendix Four: Article for Ministry of Youth Development Magazine – ‘12-24’

(Written by Monica and Tom on 12 June 2008. Abridged version published in Issue 16, August 2008)

Not Just An “Other” Student

The first-ever mentoring programme for refugee-background (RB) tertiary students in New Zealand will soon kick off at Victoria University of Wellington, thanks to efforts by various academics, geography students and RB students at the university.

Participatory research by postgraduate geography students in 2006 revealed that RB students faced an array of challenges to achieving academic success at Victoria. However, the university did not provide support catering specifically for their needs, and many RB students were simply giving up and dropping out. To help such students, a mentoring programme was recommended. Concerned academics set up a network to support RB students more generally and secured seed funding from the Vice Chancellor to create such a programme.

“It’s been great to get institutional support to follow through on the findings of the 2006 research,” said Human Geography lecturer Sara Kindon and network coordinator. “It communicates clearly that RB students are important members of our university community.”

This year, a new group of postgraduate geography students are carrying out further research with RB students to find out what kind of mentoring programme would be suitable. They have also helped to form and affiliate a club - named ‘Global Remix’ – to provide social and academic support for RB students. The club’s profile is growing steadily on campus, with new faces emerging week by week.

Global Remix’s membership is diverse, with students from Myanmar, Cambodia, Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Eritrea and North Korea. The club has held elections for various positions and begun to take on an impetus of its own, with many of the students showing great leadership qualities and a real desire to make things easier for other RB students at Victoria. As Osman Osman, a student from Sudan, expressed: “We are ok now. But our other brothers and sisters still need some help.”

In the coming months, the group aims to work out an appropriate mentoring programme and identify potential mentors. Then, after making recommendations to the

wider academic support network, the mentors will be trained and the programme implemented. In October, the group will make a public presentation on the findings of their research.

A number of challenges have emerged in the research process so far. Some students were concerned that Global Remix was linked to larger institutions external to the university and this initially put them off attending. However, when they realised that the club was student-led they gave it another chance and went on to become key contributors.

Another major challenge is that official University records do not acknowledge the existence of RB students, as these students cannot identify themselves as RB, or even state their country of origin, upon enrolment at Victoria. They are thus identified only as “Other” in University ethnicity data. This is a difficult topic to approach, because while many RB students have a desire to be recognised, there is a stigma attached to the word ‘refugee’, and some students are reluctant to be labelled in this way.

Ideally, the group would like to see a permanent space made available for RB students on campus, but funding would need to be secured from outside the University for this to happen. For now, the focus remains on establishing a strong base of student and staff support so that the initiative – along with the energy and enthusiasm surrounding it – can be maintained into the future.

Appendix Five: List of Contact Details

At Victoria University:

- The **Accommodation Service** at Victoria University can help you make the right choice and find the accommodation you want.

Contact:

Helen Kong or Brice Cameron

Office Hours:

Monday - Friday

9am - 5pm

Ph: +64 4 463 5896

Fax: +64 4 463 9974

Email: accommodation@vuw.ac.nz

Mailing Address:

Accommodation Service

Victoria University of Wellington

PO Box 600

Wellington, 6140

NEW ZEALAND

Street Address:

Room 210, Level 1, Atrium

Student Union Building

Kelburn Campus

Wellington, 6012

- Career Development and Employment (**Vic Careers**) is available to assist with a wide range of queries - from the general exploration of career ideas and the career implications of subject choices, to details of specific jobs, employers, or postgraduate courses.

Contact:

Millie Douglas

Ph: +64 4 463 5393

Fax: +64 4 463 5252

Email: careers-service@vuw.ac.nz

Street Address:

Career Development and Employment

Victoria University of Wellington

14 Kelburn Parade

Wellington

Postal Address:

Career Development and Employment

Victoria University of Wellington

PO Box 600

Wellington 6140

- The **Counseling Service** supports Vic students to do well academically and personally whilst they are at university. They help students work out where they are heading and what's stopping them staying on track.

Contact:

Magdalen Ser

Kelburn Campus Ph: 04 463 5310

Te Aro Campus Ph: 04 463 5310

Karori Campus Ph: 04 463 9537

Pipitea Campus Ph; 04 463 7474

Email; counselling-service@vuw.ac.nz

Postal Address:

Counselling Service
Victoria University of Wellington
PO Box 600
Wellington
NEW ZEALAND

- The **Disability Support Service** DSS provides liaison, accommodations, support, and services for students with disabilities attending Victoria University of Wellington or the Wellington College of Education, as well as prospective students.

Contact:

Joanna Clover, Susan Fowler, Susan Barret or Linda Bain

[Kelburn Campus](#) (Main Office) Ph: +64 4 463 6070

[Pipitea Campus](#) Ph: +64 4 463 7474

[Karori Campus](#) Ph: +64 4 463 9537

Fax: +64 4 463 5104

Email: disability@vuw.ac.nz

Postal Address:

Disability Support Services

Victoria University of Wellington

P.O. Box 600

Wellington

New Zealand

- **Muslim Students Association of VUW (MSVUW).** This club endeavours to represent Muslim students and to carry out activities that benefit our members and to make others aware about Islam and Muslims. Their primary objective is to ensure the basic needs of all Muslim students at Vic are being catered for. The current prayer rooms are located at the Kelburn Campus at KK202A, and at the Railway Campus in room 401.

Contact:

Sadiya Jimale

Email: vicmuslims@yahoo.com

- **Staff Network to support refugee-background students at VUW.** This network consists of a number of well-informed general and academic staff whose vision is to see “[RB] students at VUW achieve academically at the same rate as the general student population in an inclusive and responsive university environment, which provides targeted services and support.”

Contact:

Sara Kindon

School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences
Victoria University of Wellington
PO Box 600
Wellington
Email: Sara.kindon@vuw.ac.nz
Phone: 04 463 6194

- **Student Finance** offers practical budget advice to help you manage your money while studying, advice on how the Student Loans and Allowances system works including liaising with StudyLink to resolve any problems, help with applications to the Hardship Fund, preparation of financial statements for scholarship applications and general financial information.

Contact:
Maria Gonzalez-Rourke
Ph: +64 4 463 7474
Fax: +64 4 463 5252
Email: student-hardship@vuw.ac.nz

Mailing Address:
Financial Support & Advice
Victoria University of Wellington
PO Box 600
Wellington
New Zealand

- The **Student Health Service** provides primary health care (including health education, health promotion and preventive care) for all students at Victoria University across all campuses.

Contact for appointments and general inquiries:

[Kelburn Campus](#) Ph: (04) 463 5308

[Te Aro Campus](#) Ph:(04) 463 5308

[Karori Campus](#) Ph: (04) 463 9537

[Pipitea Campus](#) Ph: (04) 463 7474

- **Student Job Search** brings students and employers together. They provide a free service, listing and filling part-time or casual jobs throughout the year and full-time jobs over the summer break.

15 Mount St

Kelburn

Wellington

(Off the Terrace, on to Salamanca and then take the first left past the dairy)

Ph: 04 471 1967

Email: jobs.wellington@sis.co.nz

- **Student Learning Support (SLS)** works with all students from first year undergraduates to postgraduates. They offer a large variety of programmes, ranging from one to one appointments to group seminars.

Contact:

Mary Roberts

Kelburn Campus

Level 0, Kirk Wing, Hunter Courtyard, Kelburn, Wellington.

Hours: Monday to Friday, 8.30am-4.30pm.

Pipitea Campus

Student Services, Level 2, Railway Station, West Wing.

Hours: Tuesdays and Fridays, 8.30am- 3.30pm.

Email: student-learning@vuw.ac.nz

Ph: +64 4 463 5999

Fax: +64 4 463 5400

Postal Address:

Student Learning Support Service

Victoria University of Wellington

PO Box 600

Wellington

New Zealand

- **StudyLink** is a service of the Ministry of Social Development. They seek to ensure that students get the finance and support they are entitled to so they can complete their study.

For general enquiries contact:

Ph: 0800 889 900

Email: www.studylink.govt.nz

Or James Maxwell, the StudyLink Outreach Officer:

James.Maxwell004@msd.govt.nz

- **VUWSA** (Victoria University Students Association) is the official representative body for students studying at Victoria University. VUWSA provides a range of services and promotes the interests and welfare of students.

Ground Floor, Student Union Building,
Victoria University of Wellington.

Ph: 04 463 6716

Fax: 04 463 6990

Email: coordinator@vuwsa.org.nz

Postal Address:

PO Box 600

Wellington

New Zealand

Wider Wellington:

There are a number of services in the wider Wellington area that can assist RB students:

- The **Change Makers** Refugee Forum facilitates refugee communication and helped to develop the Wellington City Council Refugee Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Contact:

Tessa Johnstone

- Postal Address:

ChangeMakers Refugee Forum

PO Box 9186

Wellington 6141

- Street Address:

Level 5

61-63 Taranaki St

Wellington

- Phone: +64 4 801 5812
- Fax: +64 4 384 6292
- Email: info@crf.org.nz
- Website: <http://www.crf.org.nz/>

- In accordance with the Youth Development Strategy, the Wellington City Council has developed the **Communities Youth Services Framework**, which aims, among other things, to develop active relationships with the refugee background youth community. It also provides funding for youth development in Wellington. A PDF of the Communities Youth Services Framework is available at the link below.

- <http://www.wellington.govt.nz/services/youth/pdfs/framework-2007.pdf>

➤ Wellington **ESOL** (English for Speaker of Other Languages) Home Tutor Service

Contact:

Zlata Sosa

Mail Address:

PO Box 27 342

Wellington

Street Address:

1st Floor

61-63 Taranaki Street

Wellington

Ph: +64 4 384 1992

Fax: +64 4 384 6292

Website: <http://www.esolht.org.nz>

➤ **Evolve** youth centre is a health and social support centre run by and for young people.

- Mail Address:

PO Box 9076

Marion Square

Wellington

- Street Address:

5 Eva Street (off Dixon)

Central Wellington

- Ph: +64 4 801 9150
- Fax: +64 4 801 9157
- Email: evolve@evolveyouth.org.nz
- Bebo: <http://www.bebo.com/evolveyouth>
- Website: <http://www.evolveyouth.org.nz/default.aspx>

➤ **Refugee Services** (formerly known as RMS refugee resettlement) is New Zealand's principal refugee resettlement agency. As well as being the point of reference for any initial issues facing newly settled RB people, Refugee Services provides practical social support for refugees new to New Zealand

- National Office
Level 3, 4 Bond Street
P O Box 11 236
Wellington 6142
Ph: +64 4 815 9100
Fax: +64 4 815 9101
Email: info@refugeeservices.org.nz
- Wellington Operational Centre
Wellington
61-63 Taranaki St
PO Box 6828 Marion Square
Wellington 6141
Ph: +64 4 384 6295
Fax: +64 4 384 6595
Email: Wellington@refugeeservices.org.nz
- Website: <http://www.refugeeservices.org.nz/>

- Wellington **Refugees as Survivors** Centre. Supports advocacy and counselling to refugees and migrants who have experienced torture and trauma.

Contact:

Fiona Camberun, Manager

Mail Address: PO Box 6187, Wellington

Street Address: 5th Floor, 61-63 Taranaki Street

Ph: +64 4 384 7279

Fax: + 64 4 384 6292

Email: wnras@xtra.co.nz

Website: <http://wellington-ras.org.nz>

- The **Wellington Refugee Council** is an organisation which aims to strengthen the refugee community, assist resettlement, promote awareness, understanding and action, coordinate refugee services and promote discussion and networks within the refugee community in Wellington.

Contact:

Silvia Zonoobi, ONZM

5K Duke Street

Mount Victoria

Wellington 6011

Ph: +64 4 384 0131/(027) 662 6142

Email: wrefcouncil@hotmail.com

Opening Hours: By appointment or leave a message

- See Wellington City Council Website for more details
(<http://www.wellington.govt.nz/services/commdirectory/display-group.php?id=1386>)

- The **Wellington Somali Council** provides opportunities for RB youth to work to their strengths to effect positive change.

Contact:

- Diane Garrett (Community Social Worker)

Ph: +64 4 380 2452

Fax: +64 4 380 2459

Email: wellingtonsomali@xtra.co.nz

- Adam Awad (President)

Ph: 027 412 5758

- Postal Address:

PO Box 7160

Newtown

Wellington

- Office Address:

Riddiford House, Level one

94 Riddiford St

Newtown

Wellington 6021

Website: <http://www.somalicouncil.wellington.net.nz/index.htm>

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Farah, Fuad (2008) Pers. comm, 17/07/08

Farah, Sahra (2008) Pers. comm, 20/08/08

Faye (pseudonym) (2008) Pers. comm, 17/07/08

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