families commission
kōmihana ā whānau

families commission research fund

family resilience:

the settlement experience for asian immigrant families in new zealand

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR ROBYN DIXON
CENTRE FOR CHILD AND FAMILY RESEARCH

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR SAMSON TSE, DR FIONA ROSSEN AND DR AMRITHA SOBRUN-MAHARAJ
CENTRE FOR ASIAN HEALTH RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

REPORT NO 4/10
APRIL 2010

The Families Commission was established under the Families Commission Act 2003 and commenced operations on 1 July 2004. Under the Crown Entities Act 2004, the Commission is designated as an autonomous Crown entity.

The Families Commission Research Fund promotes substantial research in areas of importance for families that would not otherwise be funded as part of our core work programme. Projects in this fund aim to make a difference to outcomes for New Zealand families.

For more information on the Families Commission Research Fund, visit www.nzfamilies.org.nz

Published research reports, which result from studies funded under the Families Commission Research Fund are produced by independent researchers. The content of the reports and the opinions expressed by the author/s should not be assumed to reflect the views, opinions or policies of the Families Commission.

This report is copyright to the Families Commission. The copyright-protected material may be reproduced free of charge for non-commercial personal use without requiring specific permission. This is subject to the material being reproduced and attributed accurately and not being used in a misleading context. Requests and enquiries concerning the reproduction of information for any purpose other than personal use, requires the permission of the Families Commission.

Families Commission
Public Trust Building
Level 6, 117-125 Lambton Quay
PO Box 2839
Wellington 6140

Telephone: 04 917 7040
Email: enquiries@nzfamilies.org.nz
www.nzfamilies.org.nz

ISSN 1174-815X (Print)
ISSN 1174-8168 (Online)

ISBN 978-0-478-34926-9 (Print)
ISBN 978-0-478-34927-6 (Online)

families commission
kōmihana ā whānau

families commission research fund

family resilience:

the settlement experience for asian immigrant families in new zealand

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR ROBYN DIXON
CENTRE FOR CHILD AND FAMILY RESEARCH

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR SAMSON TSE, DR FIONA ROSSEN AND DR AMRITHA SOBRUN-MAHARAJ
CENTRE FOR ASIAN HEALTH RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to acknowledge the Families Commission for funding this research project.

Special thanks go to the participants of the study. The project would not have been possible without their support.

Our gratitude also goes to our advisory team for their input and feedback during the course of the project – Ms Asoka Basnayake, Ms Chaykham Choummanivong, Mr Hong-Jae Park and Mrs Vivien Wei Verheijen.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements 2

Abstract 4

1. Introduction 5

1.1 Asian immigration in New Zealand 5

1.2 Review of the literature 6

1.2.1 Acculturation 6

1.2.2 Discrimination 7

1.2.3 Employment 7

1.2.4 Education 8

1.2.5 Language 8

1.2.6 Policy context: settlement in New Zealand 8

1.2.7 Resilience 9

1.2.8 The present study 10

2. Methods 11

2.1 Refinement of research questions 11

2.1.1 Original research questions 11

2.2 Methodology 11

2.2.1 Cultural advisory group 13

2.2.2 Field researchers 13

2.3 Ethics approval 13

2.4 Points to consider when reading this report 13

3. Phase One: Focus-group discussions 15

3.1 Aims and objectives 15

3.2 Research method 15

3.2.1 Recruitment and sample 15

3.2.2 Data-collection procedures 16

3.3 Data-collection measures 16

3.3.1 Data analysis 16

3.4 Results 16

3.5 Summary 20

4. Phase Two: Family interviews 21

4.1 Aims and objectives 21

4.2 Research method 21

4.2.1 Recruitment and sample 21

4.2.2 Data-collection procedures 22

4.2.3 Data-collection measures 22

4.2.4 Data analysis 22

4.2.5 Family profiles 22

5. Results – family interviews 28

5.1 Factors affecting families' settlement experiences 28

5.2 Employment and education 28

5.3 Support and help 30

5.4 Language and communication 32

5.5 Family 33

5.6 Attitudes and culture 34

5.7 Dealing with stress 35

5.8 Other factors: background, expectations and reality 36

6. Discussion and insights 38

References 44

Appendix 47

ABSTRACT

Traditionally, research on the impact of immigration has been conducted from a psychological perspective, whereby individuals' acculturation status has been measured and associations made with outcomes such as physical and mental health status. Relatively little research has adopted a qualitative approach in order to understand how individuals, much less families, experience the immigration process.

Using a resilience-focused approach, the present study explores how migrant and refugee families from four Asian ethnic groups experienced immigration, and the barriers to and facilitators of a positive settlement experience, employing qualitative methods; focus-group discussions and family interviews. In Phase One of the study, 16 focus groups were conducted with 104 participants – 52 adults and 52 young people aged 16 to 25 years. In Phase Two, interviews were conducted with 30 members of eight families. Family groups ranged in size from two to six members. Analysis of the focus-group discussions and family interviews highlighted the influence of discrimination, social support, language and communication, and employment and education on the settlement experience. While all the families faced similar challenges, irrespective of ethnic group, the degree of impact these factors had on the settlement experience differed. We argue, therefore, that differences amongst families are a function of family resilience, particularly the strengths of the connections between family members and those of the family to the community and wider society. We conclude that the family-resilience theory offers a useful way of understanding families' settlement experiences and issues that could be addressed, which would result in better experiences for families migrating to New Zealand.

1. INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about the challenges and problems immigrants and refugees face when resettling in their new country. Research has tended to focus at the level of the individual and take a deficit rather than strengths-based approach. Strengths-based approaches build on families' capacity to maximise the protective factors in their lives and thereby minimise the impact of risk factors, such as those associated with migration. Further, much of the research fails to differentiate between migrants who come to a country of their own volition and refugees who have been forced to leave their homelands. The term 'refugee' refers to people who have fled their countries because of war, political oppression or religious persecution and have sought refuge in another country. The United Nations[1] defines a refugee as:

> any 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/her nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself/herself of the protection of that country.

There is an apparent paucity of research and literature examining immigration issues relating to families as a whole and the unique challenges they face upon migration. Not much is known, therefore, about the roles and functions that families play in the immigration experience, or what factors facilitate or impede successful family migration. Even less is known about Asian families in this context.

The following discussion outlines the issues facing immigrants and refugees in New Zealand, particularly those from Asia, and provides an overview of relevant research.

1.1 Asian immigration in New Zealand

In this report the term 'Asian' refers specifically to people from China, Korea, India and Southeast Asia. Currently, Asians make up the fourth-largest ethnic group in New Zealand – after European, Māori and 'other ethnicity' – totalling 354,552 people (9.2 percent) in 2006 (Statistics New Zealand, 2006). In comparison, the Middle Eastern, Latin American and African groupings total 34,743 people, or 0.9 percent (made up of 17,514 Middle Easterners, 10,647 Africans and 6,657 Latin Americans). Asian people have become the fastest-growing population in New Zealand, increasing to the current 9.2 percent from 6.6 percent in 2001, and only three percent in 1991 (Statistics New Zealand, 2006). Moreover, this growth is expected to continue, with current projections being that Asian ethnic groups will account for almost 15 percent of the total population in New Zealand by 2021. The growth in the Asian population has been facilitated by legislative changes to New Zealand's migration rules over the past two decades, which have seen New Zealand attract migrants from around the world (Tse, Fernando, Wong, & Kumar, 2004). The Immigration Amendment Act 1991 allowed for residence criteria to be set. The General Category for residence, a points-based immigration policy, was introduced, and it required successful applicants to have a modest level of English. These changes enabled people from non-traditional source countries, especially those in Asia, to meet the criteria more easily. This resulted in Asians substantially exceeding the Government's targets and sensitive immigration issues becoming so explosive that they threatened social cohesion (Farmer, 1997), as observed in reactions from New Zealanders at the time. Consequently, the regulations were reviewed again in October 1995 and the points system was replaced with a 'pass mark', and English-language requirements became tighter. The purpose of these adjustments, according to the Minister of Immigration, was to allow "better management of migrant numbers, encourage a broader mix of skills and attract people with a genuine commitment to New Zealand" (Farmer 1997 p. 11).

The drive to attract immigrants in areas of skill shortage, and perhaps a response to growing public concern about levels of immigration from Asia, led to further changes. In 2002 the standard of English required for the general skills category and some of the business categories was raised to the level required of students entering university. In 2003 the general skills category was replaced by a skilled migrant category. There is some evidence that the focus on skills and the high level of English-language requirements were leading to a reduction in the number of immigrants from Asia (Te Ara, 2009).

It should be noted that Asian immigrant families in New Zealand contribute significantly to the social,

[1] Article 1, United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, Geneva: United Nations Conference on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons, 1951, cited in Kitzoto, H. (2001). *Refugee Health Care: A handbook for health professionals.* Ministry of Health, Wellington.

economic and political life of the cities in which they settle, and to New Zealand as a whole (the Asian New Zealand Foundation (http://www.asianz.org.nz/) documents five major areas of Asia-New Zealand integrations, namely business, culture, education, media and research). It is important, therefore, that they settle well and experience good mental and physical health in their new country.

1.2 Review of the literature

The review begins with a consideration of the acculturation process. The literature discussing the key influences on this process and ultimately the settlement experiences of families is then summarised. The review concludes with an overview of the literature on family resilience.

1.2.1 Acculturation

When considering adjustment following migration, many studies have noted that acculturation is central to the settlement experience (eg Berry, 2005; Birman & Tran, 2008). Berry (2005), describes acculturation as:

> ...the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members. At a group level, it involves changes in social structures and institutions and in cultural practices. At the individual level, it involves changes in a person's behavioural repertoire (p. 699).

As Christenson, Zabriskie, Eggett, and Freeman (2006) point out, the majority of acculturation studies have been conducted from the perspective of the individual adult. However, given that most individuals exist within the context of a family and a wider society, it is somewhat surprising that to date the examination of acculturation from a family perspective has, by comparison, been minimal.

For younger members of immigrant families, the acculturation process can be highly stressful, not only because of their encounter with an unfamiliar country and culture, but also because of the developmental changes occurring for them as they become young adults and redefine their roles within their families (Chu, 2002). Furthermore, the clash of cultural values can create conflict between immigrant youth and their parents, who are anxious for their children to uphold traditional cultural values and are concerned when they see their children adopting the values and behaviours of the new country (NZFEC, 1993).

Youth in New Zealand generally enjoy more freedom and fewer social restrictions than in many other countries (Davey, 2002), and often immigrant parents try to curb the freedom of their children, restricting their participation in extra-curricular school activities and socialising with their friends (Abdi, 2003). On the other hand, immigrant youth are often eager to integrate into the local culture as quickly as possible in order to earn acceptance by their peers. Youth with a high adaptation capacity may, therefore, in some cases, hasten the social integration process successfully at the cost of intergenerational conflict within the family (Lloyd, 1995).

In addition, many Asian parents are anxious about the academic achievement of their children (Chung, Walkey, & Bemak, 1997), which they view as a marker of successful settlement. These high expectations, coupled with a lack of understanding of the local educational system, can create a highly stressful situation for Asian immigrant youth which may adversely affect their self-confidence (Cochrane & Lees, 1993; Grossman & Liang, 2008). Furthermore, young people may need to contribute to the family income or provide domestic support in the family because of financial pressures (Anae, Benseman, & Coxon, 2002). This may increase conflict and add to the stress placed on young people, thus affecting their education and their ability to settle successfully.

The phenomenon of parents and children having different acculturation goals and experiences has become known as the 'acculturation gap' (Berry, 2005). While mismatches in expectations, such as those outlined above, could be expected to increase parent-child conflict and result in negative outcomes for both young people and adults, the evidence to date is equivocal. Some researchers have reported parent-child conflict and associated mental health and behaviour problems in young people (Crane, Ngai, Larson, & Hafen, 2005), while others, such as Lau, et al (2005), failed to find such associations.

So, while it has been demonstrated that potential for family conflict as a consequence of immigration is high, the degree to which the 'acculturation gap' is responsible for this remains unclear. However, whatever the mechanism, it is clear that immigration

brings with it a set of challenges for all members of the family, which can result in conflict and emotional and psychological problems, especially in young people. In turn, these problems can be expected to have an adverse effect on family settlement.

Furthermore, some immigrant families, especially refugees, find the settlement process especially difficult because of the trauma associated with their pre-migration experiences (Elliot, Lee, & Jane, 1995).

There are numerous factors affecting the settlement and acculturation experiences of immigrant families. In the following section we review the literature that addresses the most common ones: discrimination, employment, education and language acquisition.

1.2.2 Discrimination

Research has consistently highlighted the negative impact of ethnic discrimination and prejudice on the settlement process. In particular, perceived discrimination has been associated with various dimensions of psychological health (eg Finch, Kolody, & Vega, 2000) and life satisfaction (eg Brown, 2001), as well as physical health (Karlsen & Nazroo, 2002).

Racial discrimination includes ethnically motivated attacks (physical or verbal) or unfair treatment because of ethnicity (by a health professional, for example, or by potential employers or landlords). A recurring theme in recent research is that of racism, prejudice and discrimination faced in New Zealand by ethnic minority immigrants, especially Asians (see, for example, Evolve, 2005; Harris et al, 2006; Human Rights Commission, 2007; Sobrun-Maharaj, Tse, Hoque & Rossen, 2008). This manifests in the non-acceptance of Asians, and it affects every aspect of their lives (Sobrun-Maharaj et al, 2008), and may directly affect their wellbeing. For example, several studies in New Zealand have found that migrants most frequently experience discrimination relating to employment (Butcher, Spoonley & Trlin 2006; Chang, Morris & Vokes, 2006; Dunstan, Dibley, & Shorland, 2004). Furthermore, a study of immigrants entering the New Zealand workforce (Ward & Masgoret, 2007) found that recruitment agencies are more likely to invite a New Zealand-born candidate (with a European name) for further contact or an interview than a China-born candidate with equivalent educational qualifications and work experience. The Ministry of Social Development (2008) notes that English-language proficiency (as presented in written communication) was the same for both applicants, undermining the argument that language, as opposed to discrimination, underpins the reluctance to hire new migrants. Furthermore, the level of prejudice or discrimination experienced by individual members of Asian immigrant families was deemed to adversely affect the family itself. For example, as reported in some cases, the frustrations or anger resulting from discrimination might be directed against other family members, usually younger or older members (Kasturirangan, Krishnan, & Riger, 2004).

1.2.3 Employment

Employment is seen to be critical to successful settlement. Research has shown that not only is unemployment, or problems in gaining meaningful employment commensurate with qualifications, associated with psychological distress, depression and anxiety, reduced happiness, lowered self-esteem and risk of alcohol and drug abuse and criminality (Banks & Ullah, 1988; Hammarstrom, 1994; Kokko, Pulkkinen, & Puustinen, 2000), but it also negatively affects immigrants' settlement experiences and can be a barrier to a sense of belonging (Aycan & Berry, 1996; Ministry of Social Development, 2008). The Ministry of Social Development's *Social Report* (2008) also notes that one of the major areas of dissatisfaction amongst migrants and refugees in New Zealand is employment and difficulties in finding work. A study examining labour market outcomes (Boyd, 2003) found that in 2001, employment rates in New Zealand were lowest for recent migrants from Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands, while rates for recent migrants from the United Kingdom, Ireland and Australia were similar to those of people born in New Zealand. Reasons given by employers for their reluctance to employ immigrants included cultural difference; unfamiliar overseas qualifications and experience; being a non-native English speaker or having a non-New Zealand accent; and little knowledge of New Zealand or its workplace culture (Department of Labour, 2007; Equal Employment Opportunity Trust, 2000; Henderson, 2003; McIntyre, Ramasamy, & Sturrock, 2003; Oliver, 2000; Podsiadlowski, 2006).

Some researchers (such as Garcia-Ramirez et al, 2005), propose that both personal psychological and social support factors play important roles in the employment status of immigrants. Garcia-Ramirez et al claim that immigrants who have a positive self-concept and are actively engaged in job-searching are more likely to be

employed. On the social front, having networks which include both compatriots and members of the host country was central to obtaining employment. Trickett and Buchanan (2001) suggest that having social support networks which include people who share the same goals and concerns reduces feelings of vulnerability and increases knowledge of the employment environment.

Finally, Garcia-Ramirez et al (2005) argue that being employed can increase opportunities to widen social networks. They claim that this can influence employment status, but that the challenge is to determine how to enhance the personal psychological factors associated with gaining employment in the first place.

1.2.4 Education

Differences in education systems and qualifications often create employment difficulties for adults and coping difficulties for youth at school, which in turn affects how well families settle in the host country. Furthermore, many young refugees come to New Zealand with very little or no education, compounding these problems. For some families, educational opportunities are a driver for migration. Suarez-Orozco (2001), in a review of literature on immigration and education, points out that the literature paints a complex picture, with some immigrant students doing as well if not better than children from the host country with respect to academic performance and attitudes to school, and others whose achievement is below that of children from the mainstream culture. Unsurprisingly, children of highly educated parents tend to perform better at school (see Portes & Rumbaut, 2001), as do children of parents and communities who can provide them with strategies to deal with what they perceive as the negative practices and attitudes of the host culture (such as attitudes to authority, discipline and peer relations). It appears that poor immigrants and refugees are particularly vulnerable. Such families tend to have less economic, cultural and social capital, meaning they have fewer options. Children from such families tend to find themselves in schools with fewer resources to cater for their specific needs. In addition, poor English skills mean that they often find themselves on non-academic pathways, which further restricts their long-term opportunities (Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Factors such as grief (associated with leaving family and friends), cultural shock and stress can mean that immigrant students are less likely to participate in studies or sports outside the classroom or school. This can impede their learning and settlement and create significant adjustment problems (Abdi, 2003; Bell, 2000). These problems may be exacerbated by the difficulties some schools experience in coping with the academic and cultural challenges of immigrant students (Beaver & Tuck, 1998). It should be noted, however, that the research resulting in these conclusions has largely been undertaken in the United States. Given the increasingly multicultural population of New Zealand, this seems an important area for further research in this country, particularly if school-based interventions are to foster academic success and cross-cultural understandings.

1.2.5 Language

A significant factor in all areas of the settlement experience is proficiency in the English language. Access to the resources associated with social, economic and cultural integration is very dependent on proficiency in the host country's language (Segal & Mayadas, 2005). As mentioned earlier, it can prove to be a major impediment to both employment and educational opportunities, as well as to communicating with health-care and social services (Miller & Chandler, 2002).

Many students from Asia have had some exposure to English in their country of origin. However, while some immigrants, especially refugees, initially face difficulties in communicating in English, research suggests that most readily overcome it (Guerin, Abdi & Guerin, 2003; DeSouza, 2006; Watts, White, & Drago, 2002). Research has found that migrant and refugee parents would like their children to develop proficiency in English; however, they would also like them to retain their native language, as they believe it will ensure that they maintain close links with their country of origin (Underhill-Sem & Fitzgerald, 1996). Maintenance of ethnic languages is seen as a way of sustaining ethnic identity, and young people are often aware of the dangers of language-loss.

In the following section of the review we turn our attention to the policy relating to settlement in New Zealand and examine the literature on family resilience as a context in which to understand acculturation and family settlement.

1.2.6 Policy context: settlement in New Zealand

There is some anecdotal and empirical evidence suggesting that Asian immigrants in New Zealand are experiencing the challenges discussed above, that the needs of these families as a whole are poorly understood and that many are not receiving the necessary levels of support and acceptance (Tse, Fernando, Wong, & Kumar, 2004). The Government's response to settlement

issues, including two published reports,[2] was to develop an inter-agency *New Zealand Settlement Strategy*[3] under the leadership of the Department of Labour, to address settlement gaps and improve collaboration between settlement service-providers to facilitate settlement for migrants and refugees. The initial strategy outlined six goals to enable migrants and refugees to settle successfully. It was later revised (Department of Labour, 2007a) to include a vision and three high-level goals that linked to the then Government's three priority areas of economic transformation, families young and old, and national identity. It also included seven intermediate-level goals intended to contribute to the outcomes articulated in the high-level goals, ensuring that immigrants, refugees and their families:

> are accepted and respected by host communities for their diverse cultural backgrounds and their community interactions are positive
> obtain employment appropriate to their qualifications and skills and are valued for their contribution to economic transformation and innovation
> become confident using English in a New Zealand setting or are able to access appropriate language support
> access appropriate information and responsive services that are available in the wider community
> form supportive social networks and establish a sustainable community identity
> feel safe within the wider community in which they live
> accept and respect the New Zealand way of life and contribute to civic community and social activities (pp. 9–11).

The revised version recognises the significance of acceptance and respect of migrant and refugee families by host communities and repositions this as the first intermediate goal. It also expands the employment goal to include the valuing of migrants' and refugees' contributions to economic transformation and innovation. A seventh goal was added: that migrants and refugees should accept, respect and contribute to the New Zealand way of life. These revisions were intended to recognise that migrants and refugees are not passive recipients of settlement support, but also have shared responsibility for the outcome of the settlement process. However, the goal of migrants and refugees feeling safe was revised to exclude the safe expression of their ethnic identity (as originally expressed in the 2004 strategy), which is a much more specific and significant goal for migrants and refugees than just feeling safe within their wider community or establishing "a sustainable community identity". Feeling safe to express their ethnic identity is important to immigrants, especially those who are ethnically different from the host population and who may be subject to discrimination (Sobrun-Maharaj, et al, 2008).

1.2.7 Resilience

Migration has been described as the most radical transition and life-changing experience that a family can face (Greeff & Holtzkamp, 2007). As stated above, there are innumerable potential sources of stress, including changes in families' financial and relationship status, the loss and grief associated with leaving family and friends and the stress associated with securing employment and housing, and these issues are often compounded by a lack of proficiency with the host language and host attitudes towards immigrants (Beiser & Hou, 2006). It is clear, however, that not all families experience the immigration process in the same way, despite in many cases seemingly facing the same challenges. Resilience theory is a means to understand the different ways in which families experience settlement.

Luthar, Cicchetti and Becker (2000) defined resilience as "a dynamic process of encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity" (p. 543). The concept of resilience was originally applied to the individual, with research focusing on factors such as personality traits and coping styles that enable the individual to succeed in the face of adversity (see, for example, Werner, 1993). More recently, resilience has come to be seen as a construct that may usefully be applied to families, the emphasis being on how the family deals with challenges or disruption. Walsh (2002) points out that the extent to which the family can deal with stress and disorganisation will have consequences for the adaptation of its members and for their relationships.

Hawley (2000) has described family resilience as the features of families that help them resist disruption in the face of change and adapt in the face of crises. Underlying this approach is a shift away from focusing

[2] *Pilot Survey Report: Longitudinal Immigration Survey: New Zealand Te Ara O Nga Manene,* Department of Labour, Wellington (March 2004a) and *Refugee Voices: A Journey Towards Resettlement,* Department of Labour, Wellington (June 2004b).

[3] *A Future Together – the New Zealand Settlement Strategy in Outline,* Department of Labour, Wellington (October 2004c NZIS 1122).

on families with problems to families who remain 'healthy and functional' in the face of significant challenges.

Walsh (1996) developed a meta-framework to describe the key processes associated with family resilience. These processes are grouped into three main domains: belief systems, organisational patterns and communication processes. The specific processes associated with belief systems are making meaning of adversity, positive outlook, transcendence and spirituality.Those associated with organisational patterns are flexibility and social and economic resources; and with communication processes clarity,open emotional sharing and collaborative problem-solving.

The strength of a resilience approach to understanding families' responses to crisis is the focus on the characteristics and resources possessed by families who adapt well following a stressful experience such as migration. Such an approach has its origins in medicine, where practitioners realised that rather than focusing on pathology and illness, much could be learnt from those individuals who, despite being exposed to pathogens, remained healthy.

The theoretical foundation for much of the family resilience research is McCubbin and Thompson's Resiliency Model of Family Stress, Adjustment and Adaptation (1991). They propose that resilience involves two distinct but related family responses to stress: adjustment and adaptation. In the adjustment phase, the focus is on protective factors and their role in facilitating a family's attempts to maintain functional in the face of crisis. As Greeff and Holtzkamp (2007) point out, at this time, everything associated with migration can be considered a risk factor with the potential to precipitate family crisis. In the event of a crisis, the family then enters the adaptation phase, where they are required to adapt to their new situation in order to restore stability and achieve a suitable family environment. As they work through this process the family draws on resources within and outside of the family (Der Kindersen & Greeff, 2003). The degree to which adaptation is successful can be expected to be a function of the availability and quality of such resources.

To date, a number of factors have been associated with resilience in immigrant families. Internal factors include a sense of cultural heritage and the presence of religious or spiritual beliefs (Walsh, 2002), and shared values and maintenance of family rituals (Silberberg, 2001). Externally, the existence of social support systems, both formal and informal, has been seen to be critical (Silberberg, 2001).

1.2.8 The present study

Traditionally, research on the impact of immigration has been conducted from a psychological perspective, whereby individuals' acculturation status has been measured and associations made with outcomes such as physical and mental health status. Relatively little research has adopted a qualitative approach in order to understand how individuals, much less families, experience the immigration process. There is also a paucity of research using such approaches to identify the factors that facilitate a positive settlement experience. The present study takes a resilience-focused, ecological approach (see, for example, Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In order to understand the influences on the quality of immigrants' settlement experiences, it recognises that individuals are members of families and that families are situated within communities, which are part of wider society. We hoped that by studying the settlement experiences of a range of families we would be able to determine what contributes to a positive settlement experience for families who have migrated to New Zealand.

2. METHODS

In this chapter the research questions (including their refinement following the initial phase of the research) are outlined, and the methods employed are detailed.

This study took a resilience-based ecological approach to studying the settlement experiences of Asian immigrant families in New Zealand. This approach recognises that individuals are members of families situated within communities that are part of wider society (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). We used a strengths-based perspective, in the sense that we aimed to determine the factors that contribute to a positive settlement experience for families.

2.1 Refinement of research questions

2.1.1 Original research questions

Initially the research questions were formulated as follows:

> What meanings and definitions are given to 'more successful' and 'less successful' transition in relation to immigrant families?

> Which factors act as barriers to and facilitators of 'more successful' transition with regard to immigrant families?

During Phase One of this study and following discussions with the advisory group, it became apparent that notions of 'successful' and 'non-successful' families were problematic. In particular, there were concerns associated with labelling. Following the focus groups we found that the factors associated with notions of success varied widely across families, with the result that the criteria established by the research team did not hold. For example, families that we categorised as 'successful' (the adults were employed, the family owned a house and the children were achieving at school) often did not perceive themselves as successfully settled, and vice versa. It appeared that the association between those factors commonly associated with 'success' and therefore, by inference, settlement, did not necessarily hold. In order to understand this apparent paradox, we reconceptualised the study with a focus on resilience as discussed above and the identification of the factors that were common to those families that considered themselves settled in New Zealand.

Therefore the research questions were reframed as follows:

> What is the nature of Asian families' experiences of immigration to New Zealand?

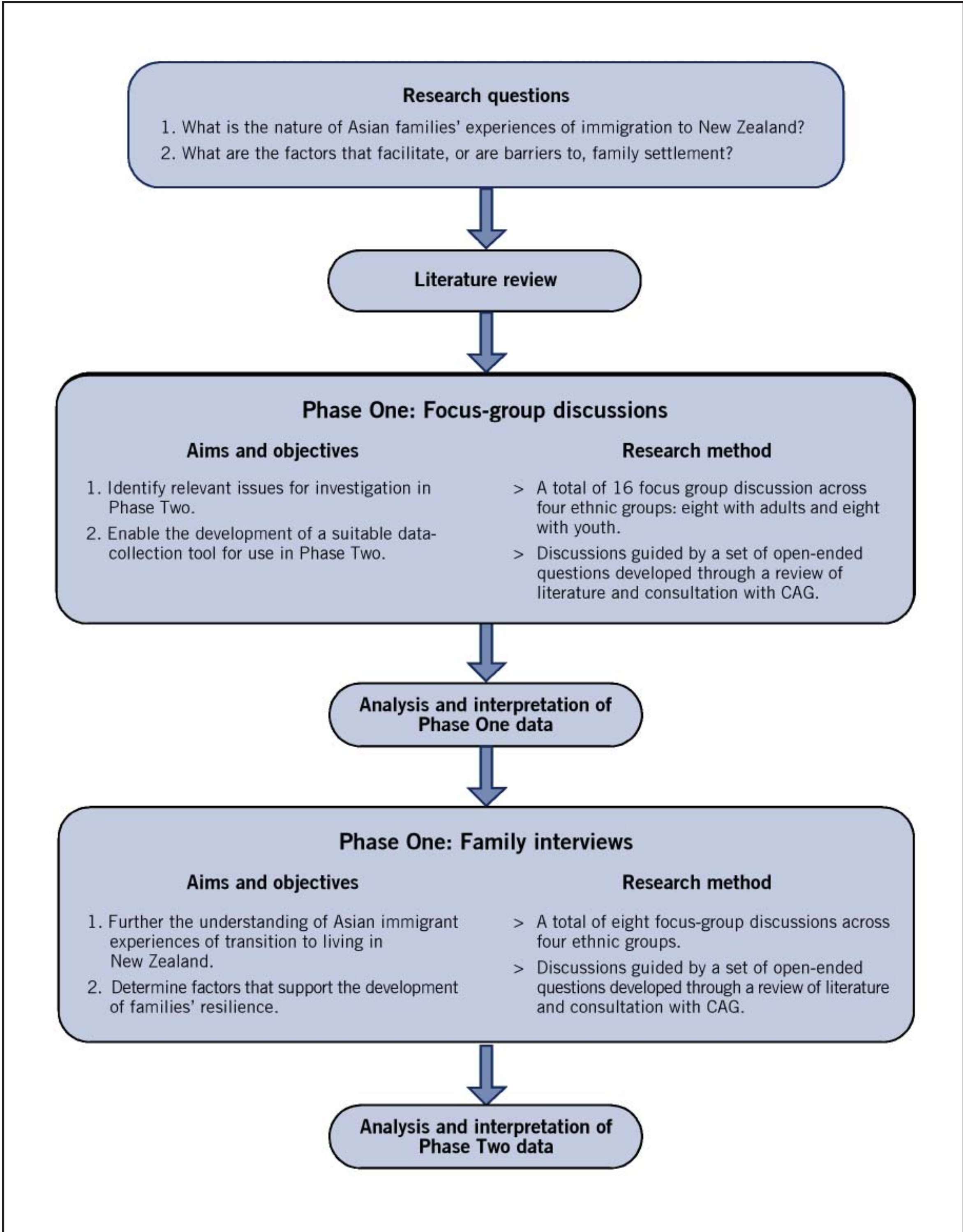
> What are the factors that facilitate, or are barriers to, family settlement?

2.2 Methodology

This study was exploratory in nature and utilised qualitative research techniques, including focus groups and family interviews. Qualitative approaches were chosen as they enabled the research team to conduct an in-depth examination, as opposed to the high-level examination that would result from quantitative methods. Focus groups were chosen ahead of other data-collection methods for the 'scoping' or first phase of the research, as they are a valuable means of accessing a wide range of opinions from people across groups through focused discussion of topics of interest. They were a particularly appropriate method to use in this study as they have been noted to work best when people in the group have a shared interest or experience, and the interaction between participants enhances the richness of the data (Krueger & Casey, 2000).

As outlined in Figure 1, the study was conducted in two phases, with participants from each of four immigrant ethnic groups (Chinese, Korean, Indian, and a group comprising Southeast Asians and Asians with refugee background). The first phase consisted of a series of focus group discussions with adults and youths, and was intended to scope and identify significant issues concerning the settlement of Asian immigrant families in New Zealand. This initial phase aimed to guide the development of a research tool for the second phase of the study. The second phase entailed a series of in-depth family interviews that aimed to explore and expand upon the issues raised in Phase One. Methodological issues relating to each of these phases are detailed in the following section.

FIGURE 1: Outline of research phases



2.2.1 Cultural advisory group

A four-member cultural advisory group was convened by the research team at the beginning of the project. The members were from various countries and were selected to broadly represent the immigrant and refugee communities involved in the research. Moreover, each member had significant expertise in issues relating to immigrant and refugee health and wellbeing.

The group was convened on three occasions throughout the course of the research: before the commencement of fieldwork, following the completion of Phase One and during the report-writing phase that followed the completion of Phase Two.

The role of the advisory group was to provide expert cultural advice and guidance. The group also helped recruit field researchers and participants, helped the project team link to relevant key stakeholders and groups and provided comment on the findings.

2.2.2 Field researchers

A team of field researchers was recruited to assist with the research project. An underlying principle of the research was to ethnically match researchers with participants wherever possible. Researchers from Korean, Indian, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Southeast Asian and Asian-refugee backgrounds were employed. Each of these researchers had a wide range of networks within their communities and had been involved in social-science research previously, either as students or research assistants. Various processes ensured the rigour of work undertaken by the field researchers, including a series of half-day training sessions carried out with the team at appropriate points throughout the project. A number of topics were addressed at these sessions, including selection and recruitment of individual participants and families (criteria for inclusion, recruitment processes); focus group and family interviewing; facilitation and interviewing techniques and procedures; ethics (gaining informed consent); safety protocols; transcription of data; translation of research transcripts; and the timeframe for completion of fieldwork. In part, these sessions aimed to ensure that the fieldwork was undertaken in a consistent and co-ordinated fashion.

Throughout the project, the core research team (Associate Professor Robyn Dixon, Associate Professor Samson Tse, Dr Amritha Sobrun-Maharaj and Dr Fiona Rossen) employed a system whereby each field researcher was assigned one member of the research team as a buddy or mentor. This system helped to improve the field researchers' connectedness with the project and ensured that they could access assistance with any issues in good time. It also enabled the core research team to guide the field researchers on critical issues such as the selection of an appropriate sample.

2.3 Ethics approval

The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC) approved the study outlined in this report on 19 March 2008 (Reference 2008 / 068).

2.4 Points to consider when reading this report

Before proceeding further it is important to acknowledge a number of challenges associated with conducting a study of this kind which should be kept in mind when reading this report. Pertinent issues have been outlined below.

- The Phase One focus groups were conducted with individual family members (not family groups), so participants were inclined to discuss issues from a personal rather than a family perspective. The researchers and group facilitators continually placed emphasis on family experiences to ensure that the context of family was maintained.
- In recognition of the sensitive nature of the research topic and the likely difficulty of accessing the target populations, ethnically matched field researchers were employed for this project. While this can be seen as a strength, and while it provided an opportunity to build research capability in these communities, the researchers were not highly experienced and this was reflected in the degree of richness in the data in some instances. However, where this was observed the lead researchers discussed the transcripts with the field researcher and this often resulted in significant supplementation of the data.
- **Power dynamics in family interviews**
  - Despite efforts to ensure that all family members were able to contribute equally, the concern was

that some family members may have dominated the discussions. The voices of less dominant family members may not be so apparent in the dataset. In an attempt to minimise this, the study was designed so that children and young people would be interviewed separately from the adults. However, in every case, the family chose, or the adults insisted, that all members of the family be present at the one interview.

- **Representation of Asian families**
  - The participants in this research were drawn from Chinese, Korean, Indian communities, and from families from Southeast Asia/Asia with a refugee background. Accordingly, not all Asian ethnic groups have been represented in this research.
- **The role of family dynamics and defining 'family'**
  - In recognition of the varying nature and diversity of families (nuclear versus extended, and fragmentation due to issues such as divorce and separation, for example), participants, and not the research team, defined the meaning of 'family'. Participants were encouraged to include and invite whichever family members they saw fit. For this reason, the structure of the participating families varied between nuclear families (as extended family were not living in New Zealand), those with family members from two or three generations, and single-parent and child families. The only criterion was that participating families must consist of at least one adult and one child.
  - The research team was conscious of the issues surrounding family dynamics when conducting family interviews. As with any group-based interview or discussion, there was potential for some members to dominate and influence the discussion. Field researchers were trained in facilitating the involvement of all participating family members and observing family dynamics as part of the research process. However, it is acknowledged that responses might have varied in a different setting, particularly if the different generations (parents and children) had been interviewed separately.
- **Translation of transcripts into English**
  - In order to conduct this research in a culturally safe manner, focus groups and interviews were conducted in the participants' language of choice. Field workers were therefore required to translate transcripts into English. The quality of these translations was ensured through guidance from the cultural advisory group, the review of transcripts via the mentoring process and the process of providing participants with the opportunity to review their transcripts for accuracy.

3. PHASE ONE: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

This chapter outlines Phase One of the research, including descriptions of the aims and objectives, the research methods and results.

3.1 Aims and objectives

Phase One consisted of a series of adult and youth focus group discussions and was designed to scope and identify significant issues concerning the settlement of Asian immigrant families in New Zealand. This initial phase aimed to guide the development of a research tool for Phase Two, the family interviews. In essence, Phase One was primarily a scoping exercise to select relevant issues for investigation in Phase Two, and develop a suitable data-collection tool.

3.2 Research method

The following sections outline the recruitment strategy and resulting sample, data-collection procedures, data-collection measures and data analysis.

3.2.1 Recruitment and sample

Participants for Phase One were recruited from the wider Auckland region through the personal, professional and community networks of the research team. In order to ensure a wide range of views and experiences of settlement were canvassed, each of the field researchers aimed to recruit participants from a range of immigrant families, with particular attention being given to issues such as years of residency in New Zealand, pre-migration circumstances, employment status and family composition.

In total, 16 focus group discussions were held across the four ethnic groups: four each with Chinese, Korean, Indian and Southeast Asian/Asian refugee backgrounds. Within each ethnic group, both adult and youth focus group discussions were conducted. For example, two focus groups were held with Chinese adults and two with Chinese youths. This format resulted in a total of 104 participants for Phase One. A breakdown of the number of focus groups and participants, according to ethnicity and age bracket, is provided in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Breakdown of focus-group composition by ethnicity and age

		Immigrant ethnic group			
		Chinese	Korean	Indian	Southeast Asian/Asian with refugee background
Adult focus-group discussions	Number of focus groups conducted	2	2	2	2
	Total number of participants	13	13	14	12
Youth focus-group discussions	Number of focus groups conducted	2	2	2	2
	Total number of participants	10	15	13	14
Total: Number of groups **(16)**		**4**	**4**	**4**	**4**
Total: Number of participants **(104)**		**23**	**28**	**27**	**26**

3.2.2 Data-collection procedures

The Phase One focus group discussions were held between June and August 2008. Participants were identified and invited to the focus group discussions by a field researcher. Focus group discussions were facilitated by a field researcher of matched ethnicity and were held at a time and place suitable to the participants (generally in informal environments such as a community hall). Group discussions took between one and two hours, were audio-recorded (with participants' consent) and were conducted in the participants' preferred language. Each focus group participant received a $20 voucher as a token of the research team's appreciation.

3.3 Data-collection measures

A set of open-ended questions covering a wide range of issues (Appendix p. 47) was developed to guide the focus group discussions. The questions were designed to facilitate the exploration of participants' immigration experiences, and were informed by the literature review and input from the cultural advisory group.

3.3.1 Data analysis

Focus group discussions were transcribed and translated into English (where applicable) by the field researchers. Each discussion was transcribed as soon as possible following the completion of each focus group.

Transcripts of the qualitative data generated through the focus groups were analysed using a general inductive approach (Thomas, 2006) that enables the selection of themes, clusters and categories relevant to the research objectives. Following the receipt of all 16 focus group transcripts, each member of the lead research team independently analysed eight focus group transcripts (a full set of transcripts from two of the four ethnic groups). The team then came together for a half-day data-analysis workshop where they compared their analyses and interpretations and noted the presence of recurring themes, or themes common to particular groups.

As a follow-up to the above analysis, the project's cultural advisory group was reconvened for the second time and presented with preliminary findings from the focus groups.

3.4 Results

The following seven themes were derived from the analysis of the focus group discussions:

1. Quality of preparation and information to aid settlement in New Zealand.
2. Nature of support or help: for example, from family and friends (both in New Zealand and in home country), work colleagues or employers, government agencies.
3. Employment and education: experiences with gaining and maintaining suitable employment, recognition of qualifications, different education systems and styles of schooling.
4. Language: the role of language in settlement.
5. Family dynamics: changing family roles and lifestyle, the effects of immigration on family cohesion or dissolution.
6. Dealing with stress: common concerns and stressful issues for Asian immigrant families and strategies employed to deal with them.
7. Expectations and reality: differences between expectations for living in New Zealand and actual experiences, and the implications for families.

It is worth noting that many of the above topic areas are closely interconnected and not mutually exclusive. Each theme is covered briefly in the following section.

Theme 1: Quality of preparation and information to aid settlement in New Zealand

Most participants commented on their families' level of preparation and prior knowledge about New Zealand and how it affected their experiences, as well as difficulties with accessing information once they were living here. The issues ranged from lacking understanding of New Zealand culture to more everyday concerns, such as where to shop; transport (including driver's licences and public transport); the logistics of housing (protocols around rent, mortgages); and other related services (such as electricity and recycling). The following quotes illustrate some of the issues:

> Before we came to New Zealand we knew little about this country… (Southeast Asian/refugee, male, adult)

> I wanted to co-operate, but find [it] so hard to understand the rubbish collection and recycling system… I have not been able to access this information. (Chinese, male, adult)

> We only had a bit of information that there is a country called New Zealand and they were accepting immigrants. We didn't have any idea about how to live and what to do to live. (Korean, male, adult)

> Migrants should know about employment opportunities, culture, how to apply for jobs, CV style etc. It will be easier for them psychologically also. (Indian, male, adult)

Theme 2: Nature of support or help

Most participants agreed that support was integral to the settling process for their family. The support that families required and experienced was varied, with both formal and informal networks being useful. Sources of 'formal' support included services such as the Citizens Advice Bureau and Work and Income. It is worth mentioning, however, that the participants' experiences and level of satisfaction with some services varied greatly.

For many families, moving to New Zealand resulted in the loss of support from extended family networks. Some participants explained the resulting social isolation and the strategies that helped them maintain social links with family:

> I sometimes feel like going back because I love to stay with elders and here we are all alone. My grandmother looked after me so I was very close to her and used to miss her a lot when I came here. (Indian, male, adult)

> Before migration, I used to have a very close relationship with my maiden family (we used to phone and helped each other) and it was so expensive to pay the international call, especially during the earlier years of migration and it is our financial burden to call our families in Hong Kong. It took us a long time to settle down … we keep phoning our extended families regularly – one week to my parents and the other week to my husband's family. To save money, we wrote down all the key things to tell on a paper and would ask the family to pass messages to the in-law family. Our families in Hong Kong are our psychological support. (Chinese, female, adult)

Informal networks, such as other family members (both in New Zealand and in their country of origin), friends, colleagues, church members, neighbours and community acquaintances were also of great importance:

> It is useful to know more Chinese friends, listen to them and know more from their experience. They can guide you to settle down gradually … during the difficult time of our earlier settlement while I was so stressful, we were lucky to have some good friends around us and support us. My friends gave me lots of help and emotional support, including introducing my daughters to join some good activities. My daughters loved these activities and helped them a lot to settle emotionally. They had good friends in the activities and lots of enjoyment. It was very important to have good friends. (Chinese, female, adult)

> When I first came to New Zealand, I just absolutely had no friends at all. In my classes, I just sat there and understood nothing. When Kiwis said something, I just nodded. But I luckily found some Kiwi friends who approached me first. And they really helped me get my confidence back to approach others, who were also friendly as well. (Korean, male, youth)

Theme 3: Employment and education

Employment and education were discussed in every focus group by adults and youths. Participants indicated that gaining meaningful employment or accessing good-quality education were important to family wellbeing, and felt that many factors affected their ability to successfully gain employment. The role of language, recognition of qualifications, whether or not they had New Zealand experience, immigration policies, racism and discrimination were all highlighted:

> Indian qualifications are not accepted though, it is NZQA. Either they say over-qualified, under-qualified or no experience. One of the major factors for smooth settlement is to get good jobs. Our parents had to start from a very low level. (Indian, female, youth)

> They underestimate migrants' knowledge. They always ask for experience. If they don't give us jobs, from where will we get New Zealand experience? (Indian, female, adult)

Furthermore, New Zealand employers are asking for New Zealand work experience. It will be difficult for somebody to get New Zealand experience without getting a job. Moreover, I had a bad time with New Zealand Immigration, as we came to live on a work permit and I have applied for permanent residency under two years work to residence category. It is not easy to change another job during PR application. (Southeast Asian, male, adult)

In my observation ... I find that there is discrimination here. Asians could hardly find a job. If there are two applicants – a Kiwi and an Asian – surely they will not choose the Asian first. (Chinese, male, adult)

Differences between New Zealand's education system and style and those of the immigrant families' countries of origin were of particular concern to some parents, particularly those who had immigrated from India:

Kids need more challenge as they are not occupied … [my] daughter can do much better if given more challenge. She is seven years old and is learning multiplication and kids her age [in India] do decimals and fractions. Does not mean India's education system is the best, as kids have too much pressure there, but there should be a balance between the two systems. (Indian, female, adult)

However, many of the young people enjoyed the more relaxed style of teaching in New Zealand:

There is something different about the teaching style in New Zealand. Kiwi teachers encourage and compliment students much more than Korean teachers. I used to receive a number of prizes in a week. That never happens in Korea even if you are a good student. I was really motivated to do better in anything while I was in primary, intermediate and high school. (Korean, female, youth)

In India the kids are very busy with their studies all the time. They go to school and in the evenings usually they will have to take tuition. When we came here it was very easy. (Indian, female, youth)

Theme 4: Language

Language issues affected all the families to varying degrees. Some participants had struggled because of their low level of English-language proficiency, while others (particularly those of Indian origin) with good English found that differences in accents made it hard to understand or be understood:

Lots of stress on English [accent] is given. People coming from India have very good English but a different accent. Here they say 'you have learnt very good English in such a little span of time'. We have to tell them we have learnt English in school in India. (Indian, male, adult)

Age was a factor of particular importance with regard to language difficulties. Adults tended to struggle much more with language and for more extended periods than young family members. These differences in English-language proficiency sometimes affected the dynamics in families, as children were often required to assist their parents with translating:

I have to rely on my son and daughter to communicate in English. Even though my daughter is a university student and my son is working, sometimes they found themselves experiencing discrimination by Westerners. I can hardly complain because of language difficulty. (Chinese, male, adult)

English is the most important thing and our children pick it up easily but we don't. (Southeast Asian/refugee, male, adult)

However, language was still an issue for many young people:

But the problem is when students first immigrate into New Zealand, their language barrier stops them from wanting to go to school. It's a big fear for them to overcome the language barrier and make friends with Kiwis. And that's why you see lots of Asian students in their own ethnic groups. (Korean, male, youth)

Although I had studied English in school they told me my English is not good and I had to do a course at Unitech. My grammar is better than others here, only my accent is different. (Indian, male, youth)

Theme 5: Family dynamics

The dynamics and family roles changed for many families following their move to New Zealand. As illustrated above, one example of this is the increased reliance of some parents upon their children. For some families, the immigration experience resulted in stronger familial ties from spending more quality

time together (because of factors such as reduced employment commitments) and a sense of 'pulling together' as a way of coping with the stresses of immigration:

> My husband and I re-adjusted our goals and expectations. The whole family united together to face difficulty. We talk with each other more and have lots of sharing. (Chinese, female, adult)

> In Korea, I did not have much time to spend with my dad. He was always busy at work. When I went to bed, he came back home, and when I woke up he already went out to work. This cycle was always repeated. However, in New Zealand I naturally began to spend more time with him. Now, I go shopping with him and watch TV and movies with him at home. My relationship with my dad has improved a lot somehow. (Korean, female, youth)

Other families, however, found that they had less quality time together. Some parents needed to work multiple jobs (following difficulties securing employment that matched their qualifications, for example) and immigrating placed a strain on relationships, and sometimes resulted in the dissolution of family units. An Indian youth who took part in one focus group highlighted the pressure placed on family life by his parents' employment difficulties:

> We don't see our parents often – when one goes out the other comes home. In India we were better off as we used to be together as a family. (Indian, male, youth)

Many discussions centred on inter-generational conflict, which participants attributed to the adoption of values that were not perceived by some family members to be consistent with those of their home country. The following quotes are illustrative of this:

> As I came to New Zealand when I was only three years old, I think like how my Kiwi friends think. For example, my Kiwi friends' parents used to allow their children to go out and do some activities with their peers, but my parents were so conservative and Korean-minded that they never used to allow me to do the same activities. I was so angry and embarrassed when my friends asked me why I couldn't join them or didn't understand my parents' decisions. (Korean, female, youth)

> Indian families don't give freedom to the kids. The parent should think that they are in New Zealand and not in India. Indian parents want what they want you to be and it is not fair. (Indian, female, youth)

For others, changing gender roles in the family in New Zealand created some conflict when males experienced a loss of authority over their families:

> In our culture the man is the boss or the father is the boss in the family, but we lost our authority as a household leader here. (Southeast Asian/refugee, male, adult)

> In my opinion like what [another participant] has mentioned, ladies are taking too much control of their husband from the negative side of their women's rights and children's rights. I mean, the solo-mother benefit from WINZ actually increases the rate of the refugee family breaking up at the end of the day. (Southeast Asian/refugee, male, adult)

Theme 6: Dealing with stress

The themes outlined above represent common concerns and stressful issues that many Asian immigrant families are facing. Focus group participants were asked to describe the strategies their families employed to deal with these types of issues. Frequently mentioned strategies included the importance of perseverance and a positive mindset, dedication to acquiring necessary skills (such as English, new qualifications or alternative employment), pulling together as a family (described above under Theme 5), and utilising support networks (described under Theme 2). The following quotes illustrate some specific strategies:

> We know that it is our own decision to come here and we have to face it. There is no other way except to persevere. My husband continued to send out letters, looking for job. I also re-adjusted my role. If I couldn't find a job, then I tried my best to take good care of my family. After a few years, my husband finally found a job. We know that we would get better reward if we stayed in Hong Kong. Here with a lot of effort, the return is only a little. Yet, never mind, we just accepted it. (Chinese, female, adult)

> I told myself that I needed to be strong for my son. The road in front of me, though, is difficult, but I have to overcome it. (Chinese, female, adult)

Theme 7: Expectations and reality

Many participants experienced a divergence between their expectations for life in New Zealand and the reality. For some families these differences related to specific experiences covered in the themes above (such as employment and education), and for others the issues were more about life in general:

> My first impression on my first visit is, beautiful place, safe … then when really settled here for good, I feel that life in reality is not so ideal and far from expectation. (Chinese, female, adult)

> After eight years in New Zealand it is our wish to be able to buy our own house; however, it is impossible for us at this stage unless one of my children works and contributes to us buying a house. (Southeast Asian/refugee, male, adult).

> I also have a difference between my expectation and reality, because I thought New Zealand is a place of fun, but when I actually came to this country, I thought it was too boring. Besides, some people discriminated against me. (Southeast Asian/refugee, male, youth)

3.5 Summary

More than 100 Asian immigrants and refugees participated in a series of 16 focus groups to scope and identify significant issues concerning the settlement of Asian immigrant families in New Zealand. Focus group data were analysed using a general inductive approach (Thomas, 2006), which enabled the identification of themes, clusters and categories relevant to the research objectives. A set of seven themes emerged from the analysis, as outlined above, and were used to develop the family-interview schedule which was used in the next phase of the study.

4. PHASE TWO: FAMILY INTERVIEWS

This section provides details on Phase Two of the research – a series of family interviews, designed to explore in more depth the issues that were raised in the focus groups and to determine facilitators of and barriers to a positive settlement experience. The aims and objectives, research methods and results are outlined below.

4.1 Aims and objectives

Phase Two of the research entailed a series of eight family interviews, which were guided by the information gleaned from the focus group discussions. The intent was to further understanding of Asian immigrant families' experiences of the transition to living in New Zealand and to determine factors that support the development of families' resilience, thus promoting a more positive transition experience. An additional aim was to consider the settlement experiences of the families in this study in the light of the revised *New Zealand Settlement Strategy* (Department of Labour 2007a) and consider the extent to which their experiences reflect the goals it embodies.

4.2 Research method

The following section provides details on the recruitment strategy and resulting sample, data-collection procedures, data-collection measures and data analysis.

4.2.1 Recruitment and sample

The research team aimed to recruit families with diverse experiences, with families from two categories being of particular interest: those who appeared to have experienced a positive transition experience and those for whom the experience had been less positive. The general criteria for selection were discussed with the field workers, who were asked to select a family that they and their community would consider were well settled and one that was yet to achieve that status. Researchers selected a family representing each category from their networks and invited them to participate.

In this way eight family interviews were completed, two from each of the following ethnic groups: Chinese, Korean, Indian, and Southeast Asian or Asian with refugee background.

Recognising the diverse composition of families, the research team did not impose any criteria as to what defined a family. Each family was able to determine who participated in their interview, and they were encouraged to invite whichever family members they felt appropriate, including extended family members.

Table 2 provides an overview of the number of families and participants per family interview according to ethnicity.

TABLE 2: Breakdown of family interview composition by ethnicity

		Immigrant ethnic group			
		Chinese	Korean	Indian	Southeast Asian/Asian with refugee background
Family 1	Total number of participants	3	3	6	4
Family 2	Total number of participants	2	4	4	4
Total: Number of family interviews **(8)**		**2**	**2**	**2**	**2**
Total: Number of family participants **(30)**		**5**	**7**	**10**	**8**

4.2.2 Data-collection procedures

Family interviews were held between June and September 2008. Potential participants were approached by the field researchers and given the opportunity to consider the research and the participation of their family.

Interviews were held in the family home at a time suitable for the participating families. Interviews took approximately one hour, were audio-recorded (with participants' consent), were facilitated by a field researcher of matched ethnicity and were conducted in each family's language of choice.

Each participating family received a $60 supermarket voucher as a token of appreciation.

4.2.3 Data-collection measures

The seven themes that emerged from the analysis of Phase One (see Section 3.4 for further details) informed the development and focus of the Phase Two family interviews. The themes were incorporated into an interview guide for use with families. This draft interview guide was then trialled by the members of the core research team with a person from one of the target ethnic communities. Following the trial, the team met and discussed their experiences of conducting the interviews. As a result, in addition to a few minor changes (such as the wording and order of some prompts, and some formatting), it was decided that it would be useful to have the family members give some overall indication of how settled they were. To this end, it was agreed that at the conclusion of the interview each member of the family would be asked to indicate on a scale of 1 to 10 the degree to which they felt they were settled, where 1 indicated 'not at all settled' and 10 indicated 'well settled'.

4.2.4 Data analysis

The process used to analyse the Phase Two data was similar to that adopted in Phase One. Each field researcher transcribed (and translated into English if necessary) their family interviews as soon as possible following their completion.

The qualitative data generated through the family interview transcripts were analysed using Thomas' (2006) general inductive approach (as outlined in Section 3.3.1). Once all the transcripts had been received, each member of the core research team independently analysed a full set of transcripts. The core team then met for a half-day workshop, where analyses and findings were compared for consistency.

Once this level of analysis had revealed the preliminary themes, the core researchers reconvened the extended research team, including the cultural advisory group and the field researchers, to discuss and verify the findings.

4.2.5 Family profiles

Brief profiles of the eight participating families were collated to provide context for the analysis and interpretation of the interview data. In order to protect participants' identity, specific details such as age, and, in most cases, occupation, have not been used.

It should also be noted that in recognition of the variety and diversity of families, the participants, and not the research team, defined the term 'family'; they were encouraged to include and invite whichever family members they chose. The only related criterion required by the field researchers was that participating families must consist of at least one adult and one child.

TABLE 3: Family profiles – Chinese stream

Chinese – Family 1

Family composition: Father, mother and teenage son

Family profile: The family arrived in New Zealand in 2001 from mainland China, where the father spent much of his time away from home on business, and the mother was a busy professional. The family came to New Zealand for lifestyle reasons and had no family or friends here. They were met by an agent at the airport and accommodated for a few days before renting a house. They knew little about the country before coming here, except that it was an island near Australia and it was agricultural. They had also learnt through immigration material that it was a good place to bring up and educate children.

The person who met them at the airport became a close friend and helped the mother get a job in retail, purchase a car, rent a house and get an IRD number. Their landlord assisted them in buying their own home. Rather than take up the opportunity to study and practise in her profession in New Zealand, the mother decided it would be best for her husband if they worked together, as her English was better than his. To this end they purchased a retail franchise.

On reflection, the family believe that the father's poor English skills have been positive for them because it meant that the mother chose not to study, and as a result the family spent much more time together, which they felt improved their family life. This was further helped by the fact that the son was living at home, while when they were in China he had attended boarding school.

Overall, immigration has been a positive experience for this family. Even though their work is more physically demanding, they have more family time.

Self-rated level of settlement: On a scale of 1 (not at all settled) to 10 (well settled) the father scored 9, mother 8.5, son 8.

Chinese – Family 2

Family composition: Mother and teenage son

Family profile: This mother and son arrived in New Zealand eight years ago to join the mother's family (parents and sibling). The mother was eligible to enter New Zealand under the 'extended family' provision as she was the last member of her immediate family still in China. On arrival they lived with her family, including her sister and her two sons, and this arrangement lasted for the first two years.

They gained information about New Zealand through family and the information pack they received from the New Zealand Embassy. The mother believed New Zealand was a small country in a remote place with blue sky and white clouds.

The son is attending school and doing well. However, the biggest challenge for this family appears to be adult-child relationships. How much this is an issue associated with migration and how much an issue of a single mother trying to bring up a teenage boy is difficult to decipher. However, it can be assumed that the migration experience has probably compounded any underlying issues.

Self-rated level of settlement: On a scale of 1 (not at all settled) to 10 (well settled) the mother scored 6, son 10.

TABLE 4: Family profiles – Korean stream

Korean – Family 1

Family composition: Father*, mother*, young adult son* and daughter (*participants in family interview)

Family profile: This family came to New Zealand 15 years ago. They came to New Zealand for lifestyle reasons: friendly people, a high-quality education system, a Christian-based society and a less competitive society than Korea. They were met on arrival by a friend who had immigrated six months earlier. This person assisted them in buying a car and house and opening a bank account.

The parents were unskilled service workers; however, after some time they established their own business together in the retail industry. The son settled well at school; the daughter, however, had some difficulty. This family believes that coming to New Zealand has strengthened family bonds, largely because the parents are not working such long hours and because they do not have calls on their time associated with being part of an extended family.

Their biggest source of stress has been the perception that they have not been able to make enough money, making it difficult to maintain their property and car. However, this is compensated for by a more pleasant work environment. The mother still has difficulties with English.

In general this family is very happy and they have no regrets about their decision to migrate to New Zealand.

Self-rated level of settlement: On a scale of 1 (not at all settled) to 10 (well settled) father and son scored 10, mother 9.

Korean – Family 2

Family composition: Mother and three teenage daughters who attend secondary school (all four participated in the family interview)

Family profile: This family came to New Zealand eight years ago following the death of the husband and father. The mother saw a need for her and the children to learn English if they were to succeed in life, and given the cost of taking English lessons in Korea, she saw coming to New Zealand as a cheaper option. The original intent was to stay for a year. The family did not have friends or family in New Zealand. The only information the family had about New Zealand was from the agency that arranged their migration. However, the mother quickly made contact with a Korean church and through the church community gained significant help in accessing services, including schools for the children.

The mother began studying English soon after arrival in New Zealand and after a year applied for permanent residency, which was easily obtained. She was initially employed part-time in a retail store while studying at a tertiary institution. The family was able to purchase their own home.

In general this family is happy with their decision to settle in New Zealand and has no regrets, believing that this country has afforded them more opportunities than they would have had had they stayed in Korea.

Self-rated level of settlement: On a scale of 1 (not at all settled) to 10 (well settled) all four scored 8.

TABLE 5: Family profiles – Indian stream

Indian – Family 1

Family composition: Grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, teenage daughter and son (all participated in the family interview)

Family profile: In India the father had been employed as a manager and the mother was a teacher.

The father has been in New Zealand for seven years but his family only joined him in 2004. The father associated New Zealand with individuals such as David Lange and Edmund Hillary and its nuclear free policy, but knew little else about the country. He already had a sibling in New Zealand and his parents have recently joined the family. Initially the mother and children came here on a visitor's visa as they wanted the children to see if they would be happy here. They decided to stay and applied for permanent residence. The biggest challenge for this family has been employment. Despite all the family members being fluent in English, they felt that their accent was problematic and added to the difficulty of getting employment.

Neither parent has been able to obtain work in their chosen field and both have been employed in unskilled jobs. The father also has a chronic injury, which has limited the hours that he can work. On reflection, the family agree coming to New Zealand has resulted in a better lifestyle and recently, more family time. In addition, the children enjoy school and the outdoor lifestyle and sporting opportunities afforded by this country.

The father sees himself as being 50 percent settled, mainly because he has yet to get a job in his field of expertise and he cannot yet buy a house. The mother says she did not initially come here to settle, but is happy to live here now.

The children are more than happy and don't think they could go back to India to live.

On reflection, the family all agreed that New Zealand was now home.

Self-rated level of settlement: On a scale of 1 (not at all settled) to 10 (well settled) father and mother scored 5 and the rest of the family agreed.

Indian – Family 2

Family composition: Father, mother, teenage daughter and son

Family profile: This family came to New Zealand in 2004. The father was a professional man who worked offshore. The mother was a housewife. Since arriving in New Zealand the father has secured employment related to his profession and is currently running his own business while studying. The mother has gained a qualification in teaching and is employed in the education sector. The daughter is at university and the son at secondary school.

The family was originally looking to migrate to North America but decided not to because of the cost of living and extreme weather. The father learnt about New Zealand through the internet and immigration agents. The daughter knew about the New Zealand cricket team and both children were excited to be coming to a new country.

The father arrived in New Zealand first and was met by the one person he knew here. His wife and children followed shortly after.

Employment was a major problem and source of stress for the family. Despite having a recognised master's degree, the father initially applied for over 300 jobs to no avail and had to accept unskilled work. This affected family life as he worked in the evenings and slept during the day, so did not have a lot of time to spend with

his children. In addition, the mother was also working, whereas she had been at home in India and more available to the children. While fluent in English, this family perceived their accent as being a problem for them with respect to getting a job.

The family was affected by the lack of social support as they had no family and just one friend here when they arrived, and even now the adults dream of returning to India. They realise, however, that this would not be practical as life is very different there and New Zealand offers the children more opportunities.

Self-rated level of settlement: The father believes the family is 75 percent settled.

TABLE 6: Family profiles – Southeast Asian/Asian with refugee background stream

Southeast Asian/Asian with refugee background – Family 1

Family composition: Father*, mother*, a teenage son* and daughter* and a younger son and daughter, a son-in-law and a grandchild (*participants in family interview)

Family profile: The father is middle-aged and is employed in manual work by another member of the refugee community. The mother has a chronic medical condition and is unable to work. The teenage daughter is married and is living with her husband and baby in a Housing New Zealand house. The son-in-law came to New Zealand as a refugee in 2006. The teenage son is at secondary school and is fluent in English. The youngest son and daughter are at primary school and have grown up in New Zealand.

This refugee family has been in New Zealand since 2000, having been told by other families who had come to New Zealand that it had good social welfare and education systems. The parents were not educated, and considered educational opportunities for their children very important. They had originally applied to settle in North America but decided to come to New Zealand for their children's education. They arrived here with 17 other refugee families. They knew very little about New Zealand except for the information gleaned from fellow refugees who were already here.

The family spent the first six weeks at the Mangere refugee centre before moving into a Housing New Zealand property, and their initial impressions of New Zealand were that the weather was cold and the food was awful.

This family's major source of support was their sponsor, who found furniture for their house and assisted them with day-to-day activities such as shopping, taking buses and registering with the local GP and Work and Income New Zealand.

The parents studied English for a year at a local secondary school; however, the mother in particular found learning English very difficult and quickly came to rely on the children, who are now more fluent in English than in their native language, for interpretation.

Employment difficulties were compounded by their lack of proficiency in English, and initially by the fact that it took three years for the father to get a full driver's licence.

After eight years in New Zealand, the parents still hold hope of being able to buy their own house; however, they realise that this will not be possible unless their children get well-paid jobs and are able to contribute.

Self-rated level of settlement: On reflection, the parents felt that the family was still struggling to settle. On a scale of 1 (not at all settled) to 10 (well settled) the father scored 5, mother 4.5, older son 6.5 and older daughter 6.

Southeast Asian/Asian with refugee background – Family 2

Family composition: Father, mother, one young adult son and three young adult daughters, one young son and five grandchildren who have all been born in New Zealand (the parents, the young adult son and one young adult daughter were participants in the family interview)

Family profile: The father is not employed as he has a chronic disability as a result of an illness suffered after his arrival in New Zealand. The mother is unemployed. The eldest daughter is married with a baby. The younger daughters and the adult son are employed. The young son is at primary school.

This refugee family has been in New Zealand for seven years. They originally wanted to settle in another country; however, there were considerable delays associated with their original application and life in the refugee camp was very hard, particularly on the children. They had heard that New Zealand was an 'excellent' place to come for their children's education, and decided to apply to come here. The parents were less concerned about their own futures, believing that securing their children's futures through access to good education was what mattered most. Another factor in the final decision to come to New Zealand was that two members of the mother's family were already here, although it is interesting to note that this was not seen as a major advantage.

While the father had heard of New Zealand before coming here, the other members of the family had not. Their first impressions were that it was very cold and the children thought it was boring. The family's main source of support was through their two sponsors, who found them furniture, and their English-language tutors, who work with them in their own home.

Neither parent has had employment since arriving in New Zealand. However, several of their children or their partners have jobs. Their young adult son has two jobs, one in a factory and the other labouring. The oldest daughter has also worked in a factory and in the service industry. Both these children had jobs while at school to help supplement the family income.

One son-in-law has employment in a factory and has earned enough money to buy a house.

The parents have struggled with learning English.

This family is still struggling to settle. They feel they have suffered discrimination. The father is disappointed that his children have not achieved as well as he had hoped academically, and that this had in turn reduced their employment opportunities. All of this has been compounded by the parents' ill health. The mother spoke often of being depressed and wishing to return to her home country.

Self-rated level of settlement: On a scale of 1 (not at all settled) to 10 (well settled) the father scored 5, mother 1.5, eldest son 7 and eldest daughter 5.

5. RESULTS – FAMILY INTERVIEWS

5.1 Factors affecting families' settlement experiences

Six major factors emerged from the family-interview data, each of which appeared to play an important role, and could positively or negatively affect family settlement and functioning. They are presented below, in no particular order, as they are often interrelated:

a) employment and education
b) support and help
c) language and communication
d) family
e) attitudes and culture
f) dealing with stress.

In addition to these six factors the researchers identified a contextual variable: background, expectations and reality. This variable is seen as essentially providing the context or background that influences families' initial experiences of immigration. It encompasses a set of three closely related factors: the background circumstances of the families (their personal circumstances, and their country of origin, which, in turn, influences issues such as their worldviews and refugee or immigrant status), the expectations that families have of life in their new country and the ensuing reality.

As would be expected with such a diverse population (in terms of age, ethnicity and background), both commonalities and differences were observed across the ethnic groups in relation to these factors. In general, however, the four ethnic groups expressed comparable views and experienced similar issues. These things have been noted in the following section, where each factor is discussed in turn.

It is also important to note that while the factors and issues have been presented as distinct, they are not actually mutually exclusive. As stated above, the factors are all highly interrelated, so different factors are sometimes discussed together.

5.2 Employment and education

Gaining meaningful employment was an issue that every single family had struggled with to some degree. In particular, there were mismatches between the qualifications that many of the adult immigrants held and their employment opportunities in New Zealand. These situations were often compounded by a sense of having been misled or 'betrayed', as most adults had expected to secure employment approximately equivalent (in terms of field and experience) to what they had held in their home country. This expectation was based, to some extent, on the criteria for immigration to New Zealand, which placed emphasis on their qualifications and job expertise. Moreover, subsequent difficulties with the recognition of qualifications were a source of frustration for many. This was compounded by language difficulties and attitudes of employers, including racism and discrimination. Particularly frustrating for many of the families was their perception that employers required that they have New Zealand work experience, with many participants asking the legitimate question as to how it was possible to obtain such experience if no-one will employ you. The following quotes illustrate a number of these points:

> I was not sure about the employment opportunities here before I came. I had a very bad experience about employment... I was a Master of Commerce from a recognised university; my degree was NZQA [recognised] but still no job. I applied for more than 300 to 400 jobs but got all rejections. I had to work in a supermarket as a checkout operator. I did not get a job according to my qualification. Here the employers don't look at your qualification at all, and not even your experience. They are just interested in 'New Zealand experience' and I don't understand from where do I get it if no one is willing to give me a job. (Indian, male, adult)

> Basically people who come into this country should find out about the employment situations here as a lot of highly qualified people are driving taxis or on the petrol station or flipping burgers … why can't a doctor or engineer be a doctor or engineer anywhere in the world? I think attitudes should change. (Indian, male, adult)

Southeast Asian and refugee family members expressed somewhat similar concerns regarding employment,

although language difficulties were perceived as the most significant barrier:

> It is very difficult for us to find a job. I don't mean I can't get it, but I am concerned about the language problem so I dare not find a job… (Southeast Asian/refugee, male, adult)

> Employers do not like to take us as they only want somebody who knows English. (Southeast Asian/refugee, male, adult)

However, in this community, as in others, it appeared that the best opportunities for employment lay with members of their own community who had established businesses:

> In terms of employment, if we have … employers who set up their own business, it will be handy and can create good opportunities for the people from the same community. Nowadays, there are some … small-company owners who run cleaning and home-painting businesses, which is an improvement for our ethnic community. (Southeast Asian/refugee, female, adult)

> I only have one experience: to work in a supermarket run by a Chinese employer … this was a positive work experience. (Chinese, female, adult)

> You know, with little English skill I only worked for Chinese people, like in the restaurant… (Chinese, male, adult)

Such language difficulties also meant that family members were unable to secure a driver's licence or read maps, which in turn limited their mobility and, indirectly, their employability:

> I had another problem with transportation as I don't know how to look at the map. Moreover it took three years to get my licence. Now I am on a full licence so it's easier with transportation. (Southeast Asian/refugee, male, adult)

> Not knowing much English, I had difficulty taking buses. I did a lot of walking, from Northcote to Glenfield, to Birkenhead, to Milford. (Chinese, male, youth)

Interestingly, East Asian families (Chinese and Korean) seemed to adjust to their employment experiences more readily. The responses below suggest that this may be due to previous experiences in their home country, where the work environment was highly pressurised and opportunities were limited. For them, being unemployed or underemployed resulted in opportunities to spend more quality time together:

> Everyone has an opportunity. It is just so nice to have that. (Korean, male, adult)

> I didn't like the work environment in Korea, but in New Zealand, I felt the difference, and I like it. (Korean, female, adult)

> In New Zealand, we have more time together and I understand him [son] more. (Chinese, male, adult)

It also became apparent that employment difficulties affected some families, especially Indian families, in terms of self-esteem and self-respect:

> Everywhere I go, and as I am doing what I am not supposed to do, I have that at the back of my mind. Like, am I really cut out to do this, or did I really come here to do this? These are the questions that come to your mind. (Indian, male, adult)

Some families found that they had less time together as both parents had to work one or more jobs to make ends meet. A resulting lack of family time seemed particularly problematic for the Indian families who reported having more time with their families in their home country:

> I was working continuously, seven days for long periods of time … not getting much time for myself and my family. I was working for 15 months like that. (Indian, male, adult)

> My lifestyle has changed a lot as now I work mostly in the evenings and nights. I have to sleep during the day and I cannot spend much time with my family. (Indian, male, adult)

> He [father] worked for long hours and did not spend much time with us. (Indian, female, youth)

A number of factors were raised in relation to education in New Zealand. These fell into the following three categories.

1. Young people's experiences of school and education

Generally, young people appeared to be happier with the education system here as they perceived it to be less pressured, and consequently easier and less stressful compared to education in their home countries across Asia:

> The schooling system is different there [in India] and the standard is very high. We have a lot of choice in studies here. (Indian, female, youth)

> I thought of going to school like going to a place to meet friends and have some fun. In comparison with primary schools in Korea kids are not forced to study that hard in New Zealand. (Korean, female, youth)

> If I go back, I don't think I can cope with the studies there. I think the studies are better here. (Indian, female, youth)

However, social experiences at school varied, with some having positive experiences and some negative:

> Teachers were very friendly. We didn't even know how to write our names in English, but they taught us how… (Korean, female, youth)

> I could not understand English. You know, the Kiwis, they did not want to trick you, but for fun they said something you could guess was not so nice because they laughed. But I pretend I understand or just ignore them. (Chinese, male, youth)

> [in the refugee centre] … it would have been helpful to learn about New Zealand school so I got some idea about how New Zealand schools were like. (Southeast Asian/refugee, female, youth)

2. **Parents' level of satisfaction with the New Zealand school system**

Most parents felt that the standard of education was lower here than in Asia, and seemed somewhat disillusioned, as many had come to New Zealand to provide their children with better educational opportunities:

> Schools in India have a very high standard, but here the numeracy level is very low, and the thing I don't like about schools is they allow students to use calculators… If the children go back to India they will not be able to cope with those studies, that's why we cannot go back and survive here. If the children go back, if they are in Year 11 here they will go to Year 9 in India… (Indian, male, adult)

3. **Parents' experiences with personal education and qualifications (to improve employment opportunities)**

The majority of parents realised that they needed to gain further education or qualifications if they were to procure good jobs. This was not always a welcome thought at their age. Others worried about the demands of study on top of other commitments:

> My brothers advised us to come here. I asked them if we can start to work here as soon as we arrive here. They said, no, you have to study first and I thought, gosh! How could I study at this age? (Southeast Asian/refugee, female, adult)

> I began to study right after we arrived here... I then worked at a … shop on a part-time basis, and at the same time I studied communication skills… (Korean, female, adult)

> …and I studied for one year and started to work part-time while I was studying. (Southeast Asian/refugee, male, adult)

Summary: Employment and education are issues that greatly affect the lives of immigrant families. Under-employment was shown to pose a significant barrier to family wellbeing, with parents working multiple (low-paid) jobs to 'make ends meet', thereby resulting in a lack of quality family time and a loss of family connectedness. Mismatches between expectations and reality were experienced by many of the families in relation to employment and education, and it is apparent that more accurate expectations need to be fostered in both (potential) immigrants and the host society, New Zealand. This is particularly relevant with regard to employment – whereby immigrants would benefit from more accurate information on the status and value of their qualifications and experience in New Zealand. The need for New Zealand work experience requires careful examination by both employers and immigrants.

Immigrants would also benefit from accurate and meaningful information on various aspects of New Zealand culture, including the culture and focus of the New Zealand education system.

5.3 Support and help

The interviews indicated that families accessed and used a wide range of support and help. Frequently discussed sources of support included governmental agencies, non-governmental and community organisations, and family and friends. In particular, many participants found that other families who had emigrated and were settled were central to them 'finding their feet' in New Zealand and providing an introduction to the community:

> When I was attending the diploma course, I met a person from a Korean church. He wanted to introduce my family to his church people, so we followed him to a concert organised by the church … at the concert, we met a lot of new people, and one of them gave us more information about schooling and other services related to education. (Korean, female, adult)

As well as facilitating entry into the community, those already living here were also able to help newer arrivals secure such things as housing and transport:

> One of our friends from church arrived in New Zealand six months earlier. We kept in touch via telephone and obtained information from him. When we actually stepped on New Zealand soil, his family assisted us in buying necessities such as car, home and opening a bank account. That was very helpful. (Korean, male, adult)

Families often gained pleasure in being able to reciprocate such assistance:

> We helped them to buy cars. We now knew a little bit and could be of some help to new immigrants. I felt the support was so important for new immigrant families. I felt that Chinese who immigrated to another country had to find support from Chinese. (Chinese, male, adult)

The importance of support from classmates and new-found friends at school was emphasised by a number of youth:

> At the beginning ... I found that classmates [Kiwi] were the most important source of support. (Chinese, male, youth)

> From the beginning, I can handle the simple daily conversation such as hello, how are you. I could not understand what the teacher said at school, but there were a few classmates who helped me to translate. Those were Chinese students, and they have been in the country for many years and their English is fine. (Chinese, male, youth)

Assistance through more formal agencies and organisations was also valued by many families:

> Of course, as newcomers, we did need lots of support and assistance when we first settled here, for example from Chinese newspaper and government websites. When we needed information about education, we approached the school. I felt that most organisations were very helpful. When I needed information to buy a house, I got information and assistance from a real estate agent. I felt that the services here were well run – no matter if it was fee-charging or non-fee-charging. (Chinese, female, adult)

However, some families reported not having such good experiences with government agencies (particularly in relation to assistance with finding employment), resulting in increased stress:

> We went to Work and Income and they told us straight away that my CV is not good, and always took out faults in the CV. We were demotivated by WINZ people, they did not help us at all. They gave us all wrong information and till today we cannot forget that experience as we were badly affected by that. (Indian, male, adult)

> We did not get much support, just a bit of information here and there, and we had to stand on our feet. It was sheer hard work. (Indian, male, adult)

The type of support received (and required) by the refugee families differed markedly from the other groups. In many cases it was about securing the basics to allow them to set up home and function in the community. It appears that this support was often secured through a caring support person who worked closely with the family, often over a number of years. Both adults and young people highlighted support that was derived from government and other organisations, and some young people also mentioned the importance of friends:

> We got a lot of help from one volunteer support person [sponsor] who arranged furniture and aquired stuff at the home where we were living so we can live happily at a Housing New Zealand property on the day we left the refugee centre. We felt big relief then and very happy when we got to our own home. Our family was so happy about our sponsor's arrangement with required furniture and other stuff. So we are feeling a lot more comfortable and so grateful to him. (Southeast Asian/refugee, male, adult)

> The support person assisted us with shopping by showing us how to take the bus and registered us at a local GP. One time he took us to a local activity. (Southeast Asian/refugee, female, adult)

> I got two home tutors. One was an ESOL tutor and another one was a maths tutor when I was in Form Five. (Southeast Asian/refugee, male, youth)

> I found two friends [from ethnic community] at school, so it was very helpful for me. (Southeast Asian/refugee, female, youth)

Summary: It is apparent from these findings that the support and help received by families is integral to their settlement experience. Support was sought and received from a variety of different sources, both formal and informal, and it appeared to fulfil two broad functions: the procurement of services and tangible resources (such as housing, social services and English lessons); and assisting integration into their new community by introducing them to friends, schools, places of worship, for example.

5.4 Language and communication

Language and communication were considered a major issue for every family:

> We parents understand one or two words of what they say in English but not all straight away; then they want to take advantage. Sometimes they think that we are naïve and dumb, so it is difficult for us to stand that sometimes. (Southeast Asian/refugee, male, adult)

> We studied English in schools and we knew English very fluently but the accent we could not understand, and they could not understand our accent. (Indian, male, adult)

> Teachers taught us English according to our English level, but it was difficult to learn a new language within six weeks. (Southeast Asian/refugee, female, adult)

> It is very hard for migrants to get jobs here whose English accent is different. They will have to learn New Zealand accent and then only try and get good jobs. (Indian, male, adult)

For some families, language difficulties resulted in changes to the family dynamics, particularly when children were required to assist family members whose English was not so good. The father from one of the Chinese families made the following comments:

> Language barrier did not have much influence on me but it did have much influence on my family. The reason was that when I had language problems, I would ask help from her [wife]. Thus, it did not give me much trouble. However, with my language barrier, things originally could be sorted out by one person, now I had to involve two persons or more in the family. It was more time and effort-consuming. From the positive side, the language barrier provided us more chance to work and stay together. (Chinese, male, adult)

Learning or improving English was a priority and challenge for all the family members, with a number of strategies being employed (including ESOL courses and self-teaching). For instance:

> When we arrived, mother gave me a dictionary, and said, pick up ten words everyday, and copy it for ten times. I study while I do the copying, starting from A to Z; I feel that helped me a lot. During that time, I might not understand a lot of words, but at least I can remember the spellings. Now I can recognise those words and understand what they mean. (Chinese, male, youth)

It was apparent that the needs of youths and adults differed with regard to achieving English-language proficiency: the young people could pick up English language or accents more easily than older family members, many of whom continued to struggle with English even after many years in New Zealand:

> English is still hard. (Korean, female, adult)

> He was only a kid, and he spent so much time with his classmates. He even told me that he learned English so much while he was playing with his friends. (Korean, male, adult)

> It was difficult for us to learn English at this age and hard for our family with communication at the first time of our arrival. Later my daughter or son interpreted for us sometimes. (Southeast Asian/refugee, female, adult)

Summary: The issue of language and communication exemplifies the way in which individual issues and challenges can affect families as a whole. Language difficulties frequently initiated changes in the dynamics of the participating families. Children can face increased responsibility if required to assist others with language and fulfil the role of interpreter. While these challenges can increase connectedness for some families (as they pull together through sharing experiences, or as children

feel that they have contributed in a meaningful way to the family), it can result in tension and feelings of role-erosion for others, particularly if adults feel devalued or that they are burdening other family members.

The resources required to address language and communication difficulties varied according to background situation. For instance, refugee families appeared to require relatively high levels of assistance, while families from countries where English was routinely taught at school (particularly India) reported needing less assistance.

5.5 Family

As highlighted previously, all six factors influence each other. This phenomenon was particularly evident regarding the influence of immigration on family dynamics and functioning. Many parents were conscious of the loss of contact with extended family and associated support following their immigration to New Zealand:

> It's just that we can't get as much help from extended families as we used to in Korea. (Korean, female, adult)

> If you gain something, there is always a loss. For example, we had to be parted from brothers and sisters in Korea, but we, as a family, became more strongly bonded in New Zealand. (Korean, male, adult)

> We don't have any family here so the children sometimes are alone as both of us work. In the beginning, the children suffered a lot as they missed the family, their cousins, a lot. Sometimes they feel a bit lonely. Here it is a mechanical life. Even in the weekends we have to do our cleaning, washing and cooking. It totally changed our lifestyle. If we had parents here it would be great, and we could get more moral support and help also. The children would not be alone. (Indian, female, adult)

As indicated by the last quote above, some families struggled to spend enough time together because of work commitments. This type of situation and the resulting impact on family cohesion are conveyed in the following quote:

> My father used to work late-night shifts and we never got to see him. When we came from school he was about to go to work and then in the morning he was still sleeping when we went to school so we never got to meet him at all. In fact, the day we arrived, also, he dropped us home from the airport and he went off to work. We were very new to the country and felt very lonely. It was very stressful for him and the family as well. It was different from India. We did not have any family time at all. He was working most of the time when we were home so we did not get any time to meet him and talk to him. (Indian, female, youth)

Conversely, as noted earlier in the discussion of employment, some families found that they had more time to spend together if parents could not secure employment or because life was less pressured here in some respects:

> In New Zealand, we had more time together and I understood him more. Very often, I did not need to talk to him but through listening to him more, I could understand him better and that's good. (Chinese, male, adult)

> It was good. If we had not immigrated, we would most likely do different things by ourselves. I would rarely see my parents. At an earlier stage of immigration, I felt a bit not adjusted as we rarely saw each other so often in China. (Chinese, male, youth)

Intergenerational conflict and culture clash were issues discussed in each family interview. It was apparent that differences between the parents' values (a stronger focus on traditional values and roles) and those of the younger family members (who tended to more readily adopt 'Kiwi' values) increasingly emerged. The Southeast Asian and refugee families appeared to discuss these issues at greater length than the other families:

> I try to teach them to preserve our culture and not to let the other culture influence. (Southeast Asian/refugee, male, adult)

> What I want to say here is that schools are not like schools from our country because they also teach about sex with other subjects. So it is difficult to control our children. Another reason why it is so difficult to tell them is because of their environment where they have been brought up. As you know, although we want them to listen to us and accept our culture, in reality their friends are Kiwis and so they learn Kiwi culture and naturally they will accept and behave like Kiwis. Although we explain to them

> what Burmese culture is like in Burma, they cannot understand as they have never seen it to perceive what it is like. (Southeast Asian/refugee, male, adult)

Summary: As illustrated above, family structures and dynamics undergo numerous changes upon immigration to a new country. For most of the participating families, immigration resulted in the loss of extended family networks and thus, extra support. Some families became less cohesive following immigration as a result of issues such as underemployment and financial stress. However, other families found that life in New Zealand afforded them more time together because of its more relaxed lifestyle (with less work pressure) or unanticipated time together as a family as a result of unemployment.

5.6 Attitudes and culture

As touched on under previous themes (such as language and communication), negative attitudes and cultural conflicts affected each family, as well as individual family members to varying degrees, regardless of ethnic background.

Many felt that New Zealanders were friendly people and that the culture and lifestyle in New Zealand was more relaxed:

> People were friendlier and nicer, and there was less competition. I thought it was a good choice to migrate to New Zealand. (Korean, male, adult)

However, many families had also experienced racism and discrimination, either directly or indirectly, through sources such as the media:

> I also have difference between my expectation and reality because I thought New Zealand is a place of fun but when we actually came to this country, I thought it was too boring. Besides some people discriminated against me. (Southeast Asian/refugee, male, youth)

> Another stress is the fact that you are in someone's country. You don't come across that every day but you do occasionally. We are coming to take away the employment opportunities, and 'why don't you return to your country?' For example, the murder case [where the wife was killed and dumped in the car boot] ... the Kiwi colleagues said, 'go home, go home'. Then I feel I want to leave. For me, working among Western people is not bad, but with incidents like Chinese committing crime, they often said, 'go home, why come here?' You feel such enormous pressure and discrimination. They react like that after watching the news. (Chinese, female, adult)

The employment arena was a place where many adults observed differences in attitudes, both positive and negative:

> I found that my [Chinese] boss here was very friendly – unlike many of the employers in mainland China. He would invite us to his home and we related equally with each other. He was a very successful businessman and a successful parent. (Chinese, female, adult)

> There was not much stress I had. At work places in Korea, due to hierarchical relationships with people above me, people in lower levels couldn't complain or talk about their work patterns or any other issue. However, Kiwi culture is not affected by those relationships. (Korean, male, adult)

> Attitudes play a role in getting jobs. I don't have very pleasant experiences ... of course attitudes have to change. It is mostly racial and it has to do with getting jobs. The reason I am telling you this is because of my experience. As I was not getting jobs I started applying with a changed name as suggested by one of my Work and Income brokers. My name was changed from my original name to a Christian name. I started applying by that name and I started getting interview calls faster than I could imagine. But once I attend the interview and they see me then they tell me I am not eligible for that job or any other reason. I don't know the reason and sometimes they don't give any reason at all. Before I changed my name, for example, if I applied for 30 jobs I would get two or three interviews, but when I changed my name I got about 10 to 15 interviews which was amazing. But once I face the interview, then, as usual, rejection. (Indian, male, adult)

Similarly, young people had varying experiences of cultural differences or racism in the school environment:

> In primary school the kids mock you and you feel bad and once you grow up you stop caring what other people think and you start accepting your culture. (Indian, male, youth)

There was not much racism when I first went to a Kiwi school. (Korean, male, youth)

Cultural differences have been a big issue for me. In Korea, you are being punished by a teacher, you are not really supposed to look straight into their eyes, because it is believed that you are being arrogant and not willing to reflect on yourself and apologise for what you have done wrong. However, in New Zealand I was punished twice because I wasn't looking at the teacher [laughs]. (Korean, female, youth)

Summary: These findings illustrate how the attitudes and culture of both immigrant families and the host society influence how immigrant families engage with life in New Zealand. As well as the immediate effects of racism and discrimination (such as not being able to secure employment), for many, such experiences exacerbated the feelings of isolation, and their willingness or ability to engage with the host community was impeded.

5.7 Dealing with stress

Families talked about three main strategies that they used to cope with stress:

> positive attitudes

> family support – supporting each other and talking with family about concerns

> hobbies (such as playing or listening to music, reading).

Most families stressed the importance of positive attitudes with regard to preparation for coming to New Zealand:

I treated the immigration as experiencing a trip. (Chinese, female, adult)

We came here with determination. When one is in a whole new environment, he or she needs to expect to experience some cultural barriers or shocks. So, I naturally had the expectation to experience something extraordinary or bizarre, even, when I left Korea. (Korean, male, adult)

I didn't feel any sort of hardship in the process of the settlement period. We were not a rich family even back in Korea. Every member of my family had strong determination to overcome many difficulties when we first stepped on Kiwi soil. (Korean, female, adult)

Positive attitudes were also mentioned in relation to succeeding once families were living in New Zealand:

In facing the macro problem like this, we could hardly do much. What we could do was to focus on our business, and we tried our best to do what we could do. The rest of the things, we just waited to see. (Chinese, male, adult)

However, I didn't feel home-sick. There were too many things I needed to complete when we first got here. I felt like I needed to be stronger and motivated all the time to survive in New Zealand. I just didn't have time to feel home-sick or depressed. (Korean, female, adult)

I am an optimistic person, relatively speaking. I am optimistic in a way that you simply go with the flow, that's life. Life will change the course of your experience and thinking. As I frequently mentioned to my son, no matter what, you have to live, why don't you live it happily? 'Go one step back, have a better perspective about life.' I ask my son not to throw a temper, just be happy. (Chinese, female, adult)

I take time as it comes and positively and think something good will happen someday. Maybe your children will be able to survive in a much better way. (Indian, male, adult)

This last quote also highlights the hope that many parents had for their children's future: some parents, particularly those from the Indian families, were disappointed that their lives in New Zealand were not working out as well as they had hoped, but accepted the sacrifices they had made, as long as their children's futures were bright.

Pulling together as a family and using each other for support was also a strong theme, particularly in both Indian families:

Lots of stress we had. One of the ways I handled it, not completely though, the consolation was I had all my family members with me. We think we'll go back to the family at the end of the day and discuss with them things and issues. (Indian, male, adult)

We did have a lot of stress as we did not have good jobs and we missed family and friends. We just talk it over within ourselves and that relieves us and we look after each other. (Indian, male, adult)

> I just talk to my wife and try to find out the best way to deal and cope with that stress and situation. For example I was cheated by two companies as I did not get money for what I have worked as a contractor for a painting job, but my family is a good strength for me. (Southeast Asian/refugee, male, adult)

> For us, we dealt with stress together. (Chinese, female, adult)

Various hobbies were mentioned as ways of coping with stress, more so by young family members than adults:

> Being able to play the piano has been very important to me. Frankly, when I first went to school in New Zealand, the only things I was good at were maths and piano. They really helped keep me self-confident while I was among my classmates. That's why I wanted to be a musician, but then I changed my mind now, and I want to study harder. (Korean, female, youth)

> I don't talk to people. I go to bed and then wake up and forget about what happened before… I love to listen to music. When I go to school, I listen to music. Before I go to work, I also listen to music. I would try to deal with the problem by myself first before seeking help from others. I rarely do that. (Chinese, male, youth)

Summary: Families employed a number of strategies to cope with the stresses of immigrating to a new country. They were: maintaining a positive attitude despite difficulties; availing oneself of family supports and working together as a family; and participating in hobbies. It appears that these practices have a role in helping families to adjust and settle well following immigration to New Zealand.

5.8 Other factors: background, expectations and reality

It needs to be recognised that immigrants bring with them to their new country different circumstances and expectations, which, although not explicitly addressed in this study, are acknowledged to affect their settlement experience. They include families' personal circumstances, including economic and employment status, and their country of origin, which in turn influences their worldviews and the level of alignment of their cultural practices with the host country. Such aspects are particularly pertinent when considering outcomes for refugee families who immigrate to a new country, bringing with them very different background experiences and expectations from other immigrants. The following quotes reveal the different circumstances of some of the families in this study that are indicative of different orientations to settling in New Zealand:

> Why New Zealand? Because my family is here… (Chinese, female, adult)

> We came first on a visit visa … we saw the country and we liked it so we decided to come here. (Indian, male, adult)

> We wanted to go to Sydney. However, the life in the refugee camp in [country of origin] was very hard for the children, so finally we decided to come here. (Southeast Asian/refugee, male, adult)

This was also evident in some of the difficulties that can be encountered when diverse cultures meet. People from cultures that are more closely aligned with New Zealand's culture may find it easier to be accepted and to accept the host culture, whereas those from cultures that differ markedly from the host culture may be more likely to encounter racism or feel uncomfortable with the cultural practices of the host country. One topic that was raised by a number of families, particularly the refugee families, was the different approaches to women's and children's rights in New Zealand and what this meant to them as a family:

> There is one thing here I don't like in this country. It is about the police, that they don't inform the parents of their children who are over 18, but in our culture it was not like that. Parents are still involved in the care of their children even though they are 18. They meet with police and take their children back home to correct their bad behaviour. (Southeast Asian/refugee, female, adult)

> I think the role of parents has changed. In our culture we might smack a child to correct their character, but here the schools are teaching the children how to call 111 so some children take advantage of it and threaten their parents, but it is not the case with our family. (Southeast Asian/refugee, male, adult)

The degree to which families' expectations for life in their new country matched the ensuing reality varied. For some families, the reality fell short of their expectation:

> At first we thought we came to this country for our children, but they are not outstanding in their education so we are not happy with it. (Southeast Asian/refugee, male, adult)

The discussion above shows that this was a particular issue in the realm of employment, where the expectations for many families fell short of reality. For others, there was little discrepancy:

> The difference was not too big from what we expected. (Chinese, male, adult)

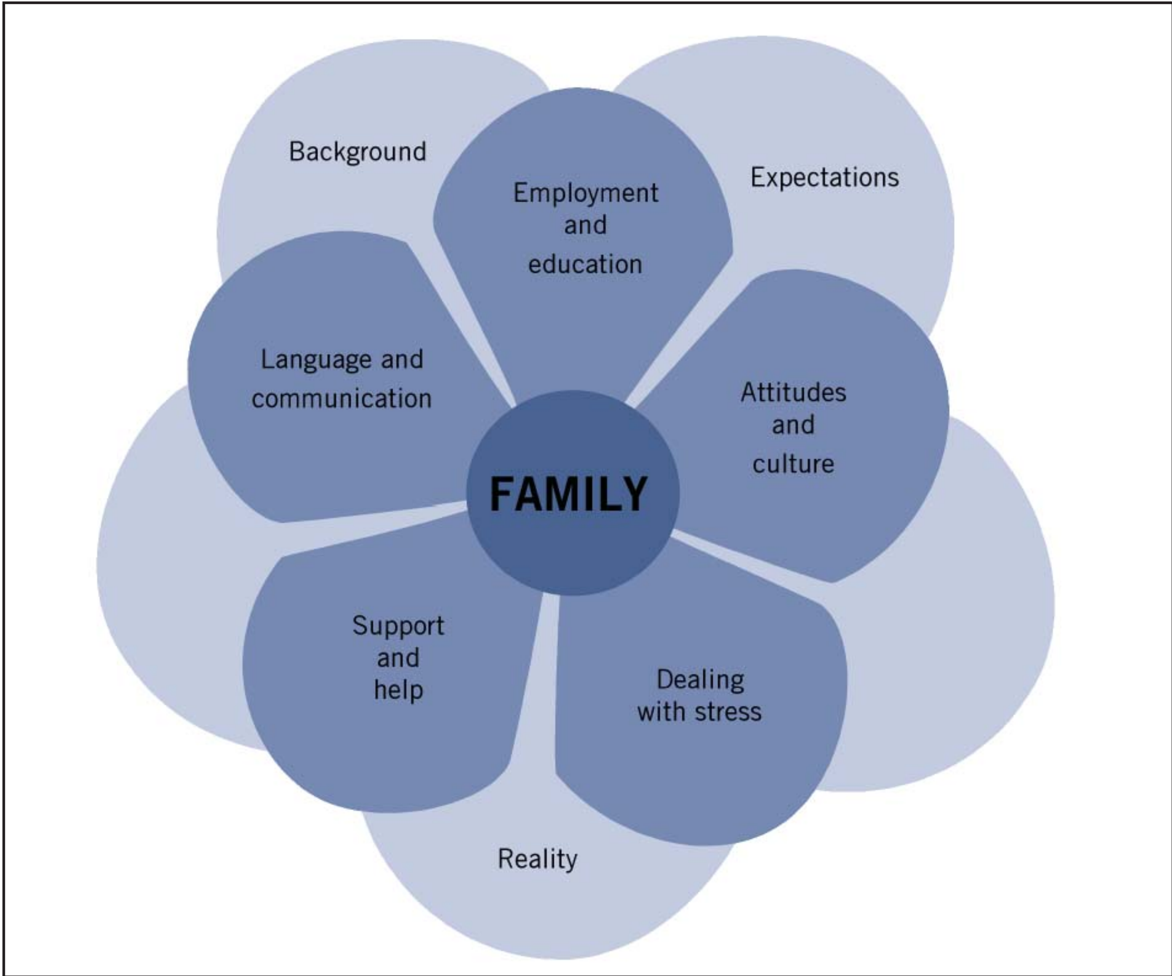
> When we were in [home country] refugee camp, which was like a prison, so we were just thinking how we could escape from it quick as possible to come to New Zealand with the expectation of a safe caring environment. The reality meets our expectations; not much difference between them I can say. (Southeast Asian/refugee, male, adult)

> It was a good decision to come here. It's better for our family to stay in New Zealand, much better than Korea. (Korean, female, youth)

6. DISCUSSION AND INSIGHTS

In this section we will attempt to bring together the reported findings and, using the metaphor of the lotus flower and notions of the resilient family, look at the insights that have been gleaned and the possible implications for people working to support immigrant and refugee families.

FIGURE 2: The metaphor of the lotus flower



In keeping with the literature on the topic, the most significant issues faced by the Asian immigrant and refugee families who participated in this study related to employment and education, language and communication, accessing support, attitudes and culture of the host and immigrant communities and dealing with stress. As seen in the symbol of the lotus flower in Figure 2, all of these factors (represented as the upper layers of petals) affect the family, which is the centre of the flower. The bottom layer of petals, which supports the rest of the flower, represents the underlying factors that families bring with them to their new country, including their background, their expectations and the reality of the situation in which they find themselves. All of these factors are interrelated and influence each other, with the bottom layer moderating the families' overall experience.

The significance of these factors has also been acknowledged by the New Zealand Ministry of Social Development (2008), which highlights the importance of employment in settlement because it affects "all areas of material and social wellbeing" (p. 67) and is central to families establishing financial independence, extending their social networks and fostering a sense of belonging.

However, it is clear from the results presented above that all the Asian immigrant and refugee families interviewed faced significant challenges in settling into their adopted country. The *Settlement Strategy's* first intermediate goal (Department of Labour, 2007a) seeks to ensure that immigrants "are accepted and respected by host communities for their diverse cultural backgrounds and that their community interactions are positive" (p. 11). According to their responses, however, the families who participated in the current research were experiencing racism and discrimination in the employment arena and within the community. This echoes the LisNZ[4] pilot survey, which found that migrants from Asia were more likely to experience discrimination than those from other regions (Department of Labour, 2004a) and research by Butcher et al (2006), which found that migrants and refugees who were from visible ethnic minority groups faced formidable barriers gaining employment in New Zealand. The second intermediate goal of the *New Zealand Settlement Strategy* seeks to ensure that people migrating to New Zealand "obtain employment appropriate to their qualifications and skills and are valued for their contribution to economic transformation and innovation" (p. 11). Every family interviewed had experienced problems with finding appropriate employment. The Ministry of Social Development (2008) notes that participation in employment is an important way for migrants to take part in the wider community and extend their social networks. The inability to do so may have negative social and economic implications for their families and the country as a whole. In particular, it detracts from family wellbeing because it can lead to loss of status and self-esteem in individual family members, which can in turn lead to poor mental and physical health (Pernice, Trlin, Henderson, & North, 2000) and prevent families from settling well in New Zealand.

The third intermediate goal of the strategy aims to ensure that immigrants "become confident using English in a New Zealand setting or are able to access appropriate language support" (p. 11). Some families (mainly refugees) reported receiving language support; however, others complained of being discriminated against because of their accents even though they spoke English fluently. This implies that the host community needs to be educated about acceptance and respect of such differences, particularly if the first intermediate goal is to be achieved.

The fourth intermediate goal is to ensure that immigrants "access appropriate information and responsive services that are available in the wider community" (p. 11). While some families could access some information (such as that pertaining to employment and settling in) from limited sources, some respondents reported having negative experiences with institutions responsible for providing such information.

The experiences listed above – in particular, those of discrimination and unemployment or under-employment – to a greater or lesser extent, affected the ability of some of the participants in this study to "form supportive social networks and establish a sustainable community identity" (p. 11) (Goal Five) and "feel safe within the wider community in which they live" (p. 11) (Goal Six).

Moreover, these experiences are likely to affect Asian immigrants' potential to "accept and respect the New Zealand way of life and contribute to civic community and social activities" (p. 11) (Goal Seven).

Resilient families

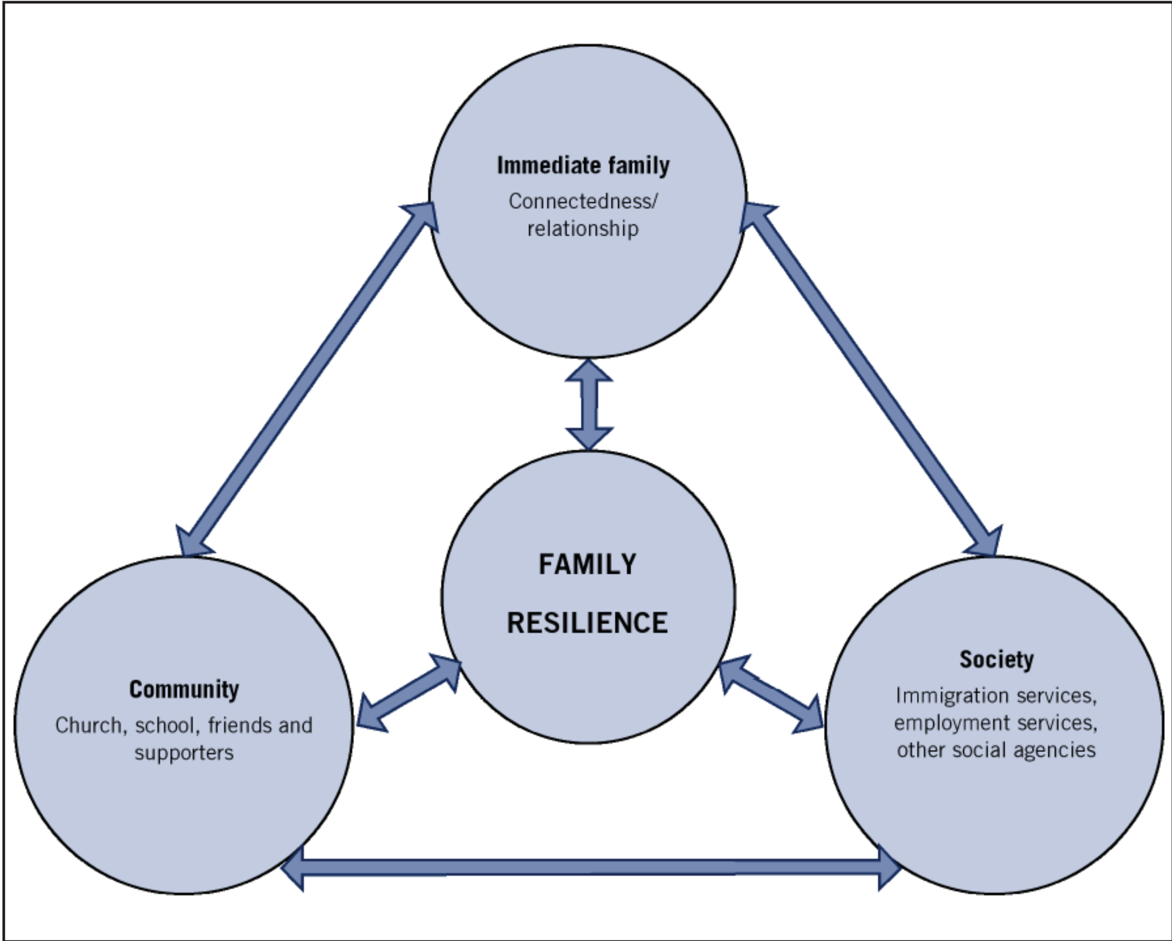
A supportive family and a sense of belonging and of community are contributors to resilience (Mandleco & Peery, 2000; Nayar, 2005). However, as noted earlier in the report, it is clear that the quality of a family's settlement experience is not necessarily determined by the presence or absence of the factors described above. In fact, some of the families, who, it might be argued, faced fewer challenges, did not view their settlement experience as positively as some of the families who had faced greater challenges. We would argue that exploring notions of resilient families provides a framework for understanding such conundrums and indicates areas in which intervention and support can be focused.

Figure 3 presents a model of family resilience encased within a broader ecological model. It is proposed that the strength of the connections and support within the family itself, and those between the family and the community, including schools, friends and places of worship, and

4 Longitudinal Immigration Survey: New Zealand.

the wider society (including support and government agencies), is indicative of the way in which families experience and deal with the challenges associated with immigration. We would argue that a model of family resilience, as outlined below, provides not only a framework in which to interpret and make meaning of families' experiences, but also a framework that can indicate where interventions might be targeted in order to enhance families' resilience and thus maximise the probability of positive outcomes for all.

FIGURE 3: Proposed model of family resilience



To this end, here we examine the findings with reference to the three levels of connectedness (family, community and societal) outlined in Figure 3, and discuss the possible implications for strengthening family resilience.

Family connectedness

Connectedness within families before immigrating, as reflected in statements such as "every member of my family had strong determination to overcome many difficulties when we first stepped on Kiwi soil", varied. It is clear, however, that where families were cohesive before coming to New Zealand (often revealed in statements suggesting high levels of communication and support between family members), they were more likely to have the resources to work through the challenges associated with the immigration experience. These were the families who talked about sharing problems and working together to make things work – factors that other researchers have claimed as being associated with successful adaptation (McCubbin, Thompson, &

McCubbin, 1996). In many cases, these families had other members of their extended family already in New Zealand, who assisted in paving the way for them.

It is clear that families' experiences and circumstances before migration are critical to their ability to have a positive settlement experience and often influence family connectedness. Major differences were observed between immigrant and refugee families, with the latter seeming to have the most difficulty in settling. Freely choosing, for whatever reason, to move from your country of origin to another, as is the case for immigrants, is very different from having to seek asylum in another country because you cannot live safely in your own country, as in the case of the refugee families. The refugee families in this study were often fragmented, with the whereabouts of other family members being unknown, or, in some instances, family members having sought asylum in other countries.

For refugee families in particular, but to some extent for all families, family connectedness was compromised by the different approaches to parenting and, more broadly, different family roles found in New Zealand. In particular, male refugees felt disempowered by the notions of women's and children's rights held by those in their new country. This was often expressed as a perceived lack of respect, and had, in turn, led to feelings of frustration and powerlessness. Members of all groups, to a greater or lesser extent, commented on the challenges to families of the freedoms available to children in New Zealand that were not available in their country of origin.

A further issue that appears to have the potential to jeopardise family connectedness is the different ways in which parents and young people experience immigration, and the tendency for young people to integrate more quickly than adults. Intergenerational conflict arose in most families and seemed attributable in part to the increasingly different cultural expectations and beliefs of the adults and youth; youth were more likely to want to adopt the cultural practices of their host country, while adults wanted family members to preserve and maintain their own culture. This is a phenomenon that has been described by other researchers, such as Berry (2005). While intergenerational conflict is a 'normal' outcome of child development in most societies (as children become autonomous from their parents), the immigration process and differing cultural expectations appeared to exacerbate it. The greater the differences between the host and immigrant culture, the greater the conflicts. Parents spoke of their fears of their children 'losing their culture' or becoming 'too Kiwi'. Again, it appears that the degree to which family members felt connected was indicative of their ability to cope with such challenges.

Strengthening family connectedness

It appears that one of the greatest threats to family connectedness is a lack of understanding of the roles and relationships between family members in New Zealand, particularly for refugee families whose connectedness may already be weaker than those of other migrant families. It is proposed that time spent raising families' awareness, before immigration, about the ways in which families typically function in New Zealand and about New Zealand family law would better reduce the shock and dislocation that some families experienced. It is possible that had such information been readily available it might have influenced their decision about immigration, including that of those refugees who are allowed some input into their country of choice.

Further, assistance in parenting in the New Zealand environment could be profitable, including help for parents who fear that their children will lose their culture.

Community connectedness

Families who reported being more settled were those who were closely connected to their community – their own ethnic community, local neighbourhood or both. Seemingly critical to any family, but particularly to those without other family members or friends already resident in New Zealand, was the support of at least one person. Families who had someone to meet them at the airport when they arrived and to help them over the early weeks or months appeared to have a positive experience. Initially, such a person provides tangible support and advice to families about securing housing, buying a car, seeking employment, and, in some cases, facilitates entry into the community through introduction to places of worship, cultural groups, schools, support agencies and services. For refugee families with few, if any, material resources, such people were vital to them securing basic necessities such as furniture, household essentials and even clothing. While refugee families, like immigrant families, often reported that this 'support' person became a long-term friend of the family, it seems that this was more likely to occur where the person was

someone from the families' own ethnic group. It is also possible that for the refugee families, as opposed to the immigrant families, who were better able to meet their own basic needs, the support person was more likely to work with them to foster those community links that were associated with family resilience. It is interesting, however, to note that almost all participants had significant links into their own communities, often, as demonstrated above, facilitated by a supportive individual from within the community. Sustained links to the host country communities were less evident. Even when participants talked about the support they derived from community-based organisations, the church, for example, tended to be associated with a particular cultural group (Korean or Chinese churches, for example).

The experiences of the young people were also influenced by the presence or absence of other supportive young people. This was particularly important for their settling, and feeling accepted, in the school system. While adults seemed to find support from an adult from their own ethnic group most useful, young people spoke of the importance of help and acceptance from people in the host culture in addition to the support from young people from their own ethic group. The ability of the young people to access support from members of the host country is probably a result of their attending school and other educational institutions. While exposure to both the culture of origin and that of the host country is central to a positive acculturation, there seems to be a need for more opportunities for adult immigrants to link to the host culture at the community level. This could be particularly important for those who are not employed or in the education system.

Strengthening community connectedness

The role of supportive others in fostering community connectedness, and in turn, resilience in these families, should not be underestimated. For some families, this support was readily accessible, as they had friends or family members already in New Zealand. However, many of the families in this study were 'groundbreakers' coming to this country lacking any established connections here. These families, and refugee families, seem particularly vulnerable in respect of establishing connections to the community. Currently, it appears that the availability and quality of such support varies, but the families who spoke positively about the assistance they received to establish links and relationships in the community also reported being more settled.

As highlighted above, the younger members of the families spoke about the importance of supportive relationships at school. To this end, encouraging schools to actively facilitate such relationships is important, particularly those with young people from the host culture.

Interventions that promote interaction between immigrants and members of the host communities should be encouraged and supported.

Societal connectedness

Societal connectedness refers to families' experiences with government and non-government organisations and society at large, and is influenced by the values held by members of society toward immigrants. It is clear from the findings that this was the level at which most families felt least connected. This was reflected in the struggles almost all families had in securing employment that met their expectations. It is not clear whether this arose from misinformation on employment obtained before coming to New Zealand, or a lack of understanding of the information on the part of the migrating families. Several of the families also described instances of discrimination, again, particularly in the employment realm, and for a small number of younger members of families, in education settings. Families also described instances where immigrants were portrayed negatively in the media – sometimes by those in authority. Families who were particularly affected by such experiences felt disconnected from the wider society.

Strengthening societal connectedness

The Ministry of Social Development and the Office of Ethnic Affairs set out key messages about what is required to achieve a cohesive society and community connectedness. These messages include having everyone feel that they belong; providing and taking opportunities to learn about others; finding common ground on values; taking advantage of and celebrating diversity; valuing biculturalism and multiculturalism; and establishing the infrastructure needed for social cohesion, amongst others (Ministry of Social Development and Office of Ethnic Affairs, 2008). Encouraging and facilitating the implementation of these messages, as well as of the goals of the

Settlement Strategy, both nationally and locally, would help Asian immigrants connect to the wider society and settle better into New Zealand.

The findings from this study suggest that most participants experienced institutionalised racism to a greater or lesser degree when dealing with various agencies and organisations. We suggest that further research be undertaken to investigate the true extent of this issue and to provide data to inform interventions to address it.

Strengths of the study

A study of this type presents a number of challenges, such as identification and recruitment of families and conducting interviews with groups whose first language is not English. This study has produced a model for undertaking culturally safe research with ethnic minority groups, some members of which were very vulnerable. The model included features such as the establishment of a cultural advisory group drawn from key stakeholders and service providers from the Asian immigrant communities; ethnically matched field workers; provision of written information, including consent forms, in the participants' first language; and the mentoring of field researchers by a lead researcher.

While most research into immigration and refugee issues is conducted on an individual basis, this study is one of a small number to involve families as a unit and focus on how the issues, including those conceptualised as being individually-based, affect families as a whole. While the family-interview method allows researchers an opportunity to observe family dynamics in action, this approach can also influence the type of data gained. Despite the field researchers being trained in family-interview techniques (including focusing on the facilitation of input by all family members), it is likely that responses might have varied if participants were segregated according to age or interviewed individually. However, the research team felt that the family-based information sought through this research was better achieved through interviewing families as a whole.

Concluding thoughts

> I think the main reason as to why Korean migrant families in New Zealand either successfully settle down or break down is that each family has different approaches to overcoming cultural barriers. For example, kids go to school and learn how to cope with Kiwi culture in various ways, including engaging in sports activities, or studying together. However, adults are in different situations. They are more focused on getting employed and establishing a stable source of income to make their family viable. This makes them stressed, and they have nowhere to release their stress. (Korean, female, youth)

This study has attempted to understand the experiences of Asian families immigrating to New Zealand and determine the factors associated with a family becoming settled in their new country. While the participants came from four ethnic groups, there was little difference between the experiences across the groups, with any differences noted being greatest between the refugee families and the families who had purposefully chosen to come to New Zealand.

Finally, during the course of this study it quickly became obvious that we were not going to be able to identify particular 'successful' families and find the key to positive transition within them. As we have demonstrated, all of the families faced challenges and it was the degree to which these challenges affected the settlement experience that differed.

We argue, therefore, that differences amongst families are a function of family resilience. We conclude that this is a useful way of understanding families' settlement experiences and identifying issues that could be addressed in order to enhance families' experiences of immigration to New Zealand.

REFERENCES

Abdi, A. (2003). *Enhancing educational access for the Somali community through positive school management and parental involvement*. Unpublished M. Management Studies, University of Waikato, Hamilton.

Anae, M., Benseman, J., & Coxon, E. (2002). *Pacific peoples and tertiary education: Issues of participation. Final report prepared for the Ministry of Education*. University of Auckland, Auckland.

Aycan, Z., & Berry, J.W. (1996). 'Impact of employment-related experiences on immigrants' psychological well-being and adaptation to Canada'. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science*, 28(3): 240–251.

Banks, M.H., & Ullah, P. (1988). *Youth unemployment in the 1980s: Its psychological effects*. Croom Helm, London and Sydney.

Beaver, B., & Tuck, B. (1998) 'The adjustment of overseas students at a tertiary institution in New Zealand'. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, 33(2): 167–179.

Beiser, M., & Hou, F. (2006). 'Ethnic identity, resettlement stress and depressive affect among Southeast Asian refugees in Canada'. *Social Science & Medicine*, 63: 137–150.

Bell, Z. (2000). *Having their say: Six Pacific girls talk about their experiences in a New Zealand secondary school*. Massey University, Palmerston North.

Berry, J.W. (2005). 'Acculturation: Living successfully in two cultures'. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 9: 697–712.

Birman, D., & Tran, N. (2008). 'Psychological distress and adjustment of Vietnamese refugees in the United States: Association with pre-and postmigration factors'. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 78: 109-120.

Boyd, C. (2003). *Migrants in New Zealand: An analysis of labour market outcomes for working aged migrants using 1996 and 2001 census data*. Department of Labour, Wellington.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Brown, T. (2001). 'Measuring self-perceived racial and ethnic discrimination in social surveys'. *Sociological Perspectives*, 21: 377–392.

Butcher, A., Spoonley, P., & Trlin, A. (2006). *Being accepted: the experience of discrimination and social exclusion by immigrants and refugees in New Zealand*. Occasional Publication No. 13, New Settlers Programme, Massey University, Palmerston North.

Chang, S., Morris, C., & Vokes, R. (2006). *Korean migrant families in Christchurch: Expectations and experiences*. Report to the Families Commission.

Christenson, O.D., Zabriskie, R.B., Eggett, D.L., & Freeman, P.A. (2006). 'Family acculturation, family leisure involvement and family functioning among Mexican-Americans'. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 38(4): 475–495.

Chu, S. (2002). Adaptation problems of Chinese immigrant students in New Zealand high schools. *New Zealand Journal of Counselling*, 23(1): 39–46.

Chung, R.C.Y., Walkey, F.K., & Bemak, F. (1997). 'A comparison of achievement and aspirations of New Zealand Chinese and European students'. *Journal of Cross Cultural Psychology*, 24(4): 481–489.

Cochrane, N.A.L., & Lees, P. (1993). 'Refugee students with no previous schooling'. *Many Voices*, 5: 18–19.

Crane, D.R., Ngai, S.W., Larson, J.H., & Hafen, M. (2005). 'The influence of family functioning and parent-adolescent acculturation on North American Chinese adolescents' outcomes'. *Family Relations*, 54: 400–410.

Davey, S. (2002). 'Interaction with text: A study of teachers' mediation of materials in mainstream and ESOL secondary school classrooms'. *Many Voices*, 20: 23–25.

Department of Labour. (2004a). *Pilot survey report: Longitudinal immigration survey: New Zealand Te Ara O Nga Manene*. Department of Labour, Wellington.

Department of Labour. (2004b). *Refugee voices: A journey towards resettlement*. Social Policy, Research and Evaluation Conference. Department of Labour, Wellington.

Department of Labour. (2004c). *A future together – The New Zealand settlement strategy in outline.* Department of Labour, Wellington.

Department of Labour. (2007a). *Our future together – New Zealand settlement strategy*. Department of Labour, Wellington.

Department of Labour. (2007b). *Migrant and refugee youth settlement and social inclusion: Annotated bibliograph*y. Draft report, March 2007. Department of Labour, Wellington.

Der Kindersen, S., & Greeff, A.P. (2003). 'Resilience among families where a parent accepted a voluntary teacher's retrenchment package'. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 33(2): 86–94.

DeSouza, R. (2006). 'Sailing in a new direction: Multicultural mental health in New Zealand'. *Australian e-Journal for the Advancement of Mental Health*, 5(2): http://www.auseinet.com/journal/vol5iss2/desouza.pdf

Dunstan, S., Dibley, R., & Shorland, S. (2004). *Refugee voices: A journey towards resettlement*. Social Policy, Research and Evaluation Conference, Department of Labour, Wellington.

Elliot, S., Lee, A., & Jane, C. (1995). 'Refugee youth'. *Mental Health News*, issue p. 9.

Equal Employment Opportunities Trust. (2000). *Recruiting talent: A research report*. Equal Employment Opportunities Trust, Auckland.

Evolve. (2005). *African youth and well being: Participatory action research project*. Department of Geography, Victoria University, Wellington.

Farmer, R.S.J. (1997). 'New Zealand's targeted immigration policy, 1991 to 1996'. *People and Place*, 5: 1–15.

Finch, B.K., Kolody, B., & Vega, W.A. (2000). 'Perceived discrimination and depression among Mexican-origin adults in California'. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 41: 285–313.

Garcia-Ramirez, M., Martinez, M.F., Balcazar, F.E., Suarez-Balcazar, Y., Albar, M., Dominguez, E., & Santolaya, F.J. (2005). 'Psychosocial empowerment and social support factors associated with employment status of immigrant welfare recipients'. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 33(6): 673–690.

Greeff, A.P., & Holtzkamp, J. (2007). 'The prevalence of resilience in migrant families'. *Family Community Health*, 30(3): 189–200.

Grossman, J., & Liang, B. (2008). 'Discrimination distress among Chinese American adolescents'. *Journal of Youth Adolescence*, 37: 1–11.

Hammarstrom, A. (1994). 'Health consequences of youth unemployment – review from a gender perspective'. *Social Science and Medicine*, 38(5): 699–709.

Harris, R., Tobias, M., Jeffreys, M., Waldegrave, K., Karlsen, S., & Nazroo, J. (2006). 'Racism and health: The relationship between experience of racial discrimination and health in New Zealand'. *Social Science and Medicine*, 63(6): 1428–1441.

Hawley, D.R. (2000). 'Clinical implications of family resilience'. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 28(2): 101–116.

Henderson, A. (2003). 'Untapped talents: The employment and settlement experiences of skilled Chinese in New Zealand'. Chapter in M. Ip. (Ed.), *Unfolding history, evolving identity: The Chinese in New Zealand*. Auckland University Press, Auckland.

Human Rights Commission. (2007). *Annual report 2007. Report of the Human Rights Commission and The Office of Human Rights Proceedings, for the year ended 30 June 2007.* Human Rights Commission, Wellington.

Karlsen, S., & Nazroo, J.Y. (2002). 'Relation between racial discrimination, social class, and health among ethnic minority groups'. *American Journal of Public Health*, 92(4): 624–630.

Kasturirangan, A., Krishnan, S., & Riger, S. (2004). 'The impact of culture and minority status on women's experience of domestic violence'. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 5(4): 318–332.

Kokko, K., Pulkkinen, L., & Puustinen, M. (2000). 'Selection into long-term unemployment and its psychological consequences'. *International Journal of Behavioural Development*, 24(3): 310–320.

Krueger, R.A., & Casey, M.A. (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications, London.

Lau, A.S., Yeh, M., Wood, P.A., McCabe, K.M., Garland, A.F., & Hough, R.L. (2005). 'The acculturation gap-distress hypothesis amongst high-risk Mexican American families'. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 19(3): 367–375.

Lloyd, M. (1995). 'Bridging the cultural gap: A literature review of factors influencing Samoan students' acculturation to Western education'. *Many Voices*, 8: 11–13.

Luthar, S.S., Cicchetti, D., & Becker, B. (2000). 'The construct of resilience: A critical evaluation and guidelines for future work'. *Child Development*, 71: 543–562.

McCubbin, H.I., & Thompson, A.I. (1991). *Family assessment inventories for research and practice*. University of Wisconsin, Madison.

McCubbin, H., Thompson, A.I., & McCubbin, M.A. (1996). *Family assessment: Resiliency, coping and adaptation-inventiries for research and practice.* University of Wisconsin, Madison.

McIntyre, K., Ramasamy, R., & Sturrock, F. (2003). *Summary report: Evaluation of migrant pilot projects in Auckland North, Auckland Central, Waikato and Central Regions 2002.* Centre for Social Research and Evaluation, Ministry of Social Development, Wellington.

Mandleco, B.L., & Peery, J.C. (2000). 'An organizational framework for conceptualizing resilience in children'. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing*, 13: 99–111.

Miller, A., & Chandler, P.J. (2002). 'Acculturation, resilience, and depression in midlife women from the former Soviet Union'. *Nursing Research*, 51(1): 26–32.

Ministry of Social Development (2008). Diverse Communities - Exploring the migrant and refugee experience in New Zealand. Prepared by the Strategic Social Policy Group, July 2008, Wellington, New Zealand.

Ministry of Social Development and Office of Ethnic Affairs. (2008). *Connecting diverse communities – Report on 2007/08 public engagement*. A report on 15 meetings held around New Zealand to discuss diversity and social cohesion and responses to a written questionnaire.

Nayar, S. (2005). 'Understanding Western and Hindu women's identities: A basis for culturally safe practice'. *New Zealand Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 52(1): 38–44.

NZFEC. (1993). *Multi-ethnic Aotearoa New Zealand: Challenge of the future: Proceedings*. Paper presented at the National Conference, Wellington.

Oliver, P. (2000). *Employment for professional migrants to New Zealand – Barriers and opportunities*. Prepared for Work and Income by the Centre for Operational Research and Evaluation.

Pernice, R., Trlin, A., Henderson, A., & North, N. (2000). 'Employment and mental health of three groups of immigrants to New Zealand'. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*, 29(1): 24–29.

Podsiadlowski, A. (2006). *Issues of migrant employment. Findings and conclusions for the Wellington region*. Paper presented at Pathways, circuits and crosswords. New public good research on population, migration, and community dynamics seminar, May 2007, Wellington.

Portes, A., & Rumbaut, R. (2001). *Legacies: The story of the second generation*. University of California Press, Berkeley.

Segal, U.A., & Mayadas, N. (2005). 'Assessment of issues facing immigrant and refugee families'. *Child Welfare*, LXXXIV(5): 563–583.

Silberberg, S. (2001). 'Searching for family resilience'. *Family Matters*, 58: 52–64.

Sobrun-Maharaj, A., Tse, S., Hoque, E., & Rossen, F. (2008). *Survey of key informants for a study of migrant and refugee youth settlement and social inclusion in New Zealand*. Centre for Asian Health Research and Evaluation, Report prepared for the Department of Labour. Auckland UniServices Limited, University of Auckland, Auckland.

Statistics New Zealand. (2006). *Cultural Indicators for New Zealand*. Statistics New Zealand, Wellington.

Suarez-Orozco, M. (2001). 'Globalisation, immigration, and education: The research agenda'. *Harvard Educational Review*, 71(3): 345–365.

Te Ara., (2009). *The encyclopaedia of New Zealand*. Available at: http://www.teara.govt.nz/NewZealanders/NewZealandPeoples/ImmigrationRegulation/5/en

Thomas, D. (2006). 'A general inductive approach for analyzing qualitative data'. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 27(2): 237–246.

Trickett, E., & Buchanan, R. (2001). 'The role of personal relationships in transitions: Contributions of an ecological perspective'. In B. Sarson & S. Duck (Eds.), *Personal relationships: Implications for clinical and community psychology* (pp. 141–157). John Wiley & Sons, Chichester.

Tse, S., Fernando, A., Wong, S., & Kumar, S. (2004). *Public health justification for an Asian study*. Paper prepared for the Health Research Council, New Zealand.

Underhill-Sem, Y.J., & Fitzgerald, T.K. (1996). *Paddling a multicultural canoe in bicultural waters: Ethnic identity and aspirations of second generation Cook Islanders in New Zealand*. Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies, Christchurch.

Walsh, F. (1996). 'The concept of family resilience: Crisis and challenge'. *Family Process*, 35: 261–281.

Walsh, F. (2002). 'A family residence framework: Innovative practice applications'. *Family Relations*, 51(2): 130–137.

Ward, C., & Masgoret, A.M. (2007). 'Immigrant entry into the workforce: A research note from New Zealand'. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 31: 525–530.

Werner, E.E. (1993). 'Risk, resilience and recovery: Perspectives from the Kauai longitudinal study'. *Development and Psychopathology*, 5: 503–515.

APPENDIX
Questions used to guide focus-group discussions

1. What do you see as the main issues facing immigrant and refugee families in New Zealand?
2. What do you see as the key settlement indicators and outcomes of success amongst immigrant and refugee families?
3. How would you define (what characteristics) an immigrant family that has experienced a 'more successful' transition to New Zealand?
4. How would you define (what characteristics) an immigrant family that has experienced a 'less successful' transition to New Zealand?
5. What do you see as the factors that act as barriers to 'more successful' transition for immigrant families?
   > Environmental factors:
   > Institutional factors:
   > Family factors:
   > Personal factors:
6. Do you think that any of these barriers are modifiable? Which, for whom, and how?
7. What do you see as the factors that facilitate 'more successful' transition for immigrant families?
   > Environmental factors:
   > Family factors:
   > Personal factors:
8. Do you think that any of these facilitators are modifiable? Which, for whom, and how?
9. Are there any points that we haven't covered that you think are important for us to know about?

Interview guidelines for Phase Two family interviews

In the first phase of this study, we have talked with over 100 Asian people about their experience in settling in New Zealand. During these discussions, the participants raised a number of issues. Now in order to better understand the impact of these issues we are asking families to share their experiences with us. To begin with perhaps you would like to share a little bit about your family. For example:

> How long has your family been in New Zealand?
> Why did you come to New Zealand?
> Who came? Both parents; children; grandparents; other relatives?
> Were there other members of your family or friends already here in New Zealand?

Thank you for sharing that. Now I would like to talk to you about some of the things that people have told us played an important role in their family's settlement in New Zealand. As there are quite a few things that I'd like to talk to you about, please excuse me if we have to move onto the next point.

MAIN themes:

> Preparation and information to aid settlement in New Zealand – tell me about what your family knew about New Zealand before you came here – what sort of information did you receive and where did it come from? How was this helpful if at all? What other information would have been helpful?

- Support or help – from your family members, workmates, friends or professionals – here and at ‘home’. What was the nature of that support or help? How did this support help your family?
- Employment (or education for younger members of the family) – what have been your family’s experiences with regard to employment? What has this meant to the family?
- Language – tell me about the role language issues have had with regard to your family’s settlement experience.
- Family – what has been the effect of migration on family relationships (for example, has there been a change of roles within the family)? What is the impact of migration on the family lifestyle – for example, activities that the family does together? What changes have you noticed or experienced, if any? In what ways has this affected your family as a whole?
- Dealing with stress – what are your common concerns or stresses and how do you deal with them?
- Expectations and reality – what have been your family’s experiences with regard to what you expected from moving to New Zealand and what you actually experienced? What has this meant to the family?
- Finally, can you tell me about any other issues or challenges that your family has experienced in settling in New Zealand?
- If you could change just one thing about your experience what would that be?
- Is there anything else you would like to share about your family’s migration experience that we haven’t already talked about?

NB – in the course of discussing each of these themes it is important to ask family members:

- How they think the issues could have been better dealt with
- What would have improved things for them
- How they would rate their level of settlement on a scale of 1 (not at all settled) to 10 (well settled).

Families Commission Research Fund

1/09 *Childbirth Education: Antenatal education and transitions of maternity care in New Zealand.* Dr Sarah Dwyer, May 2009.

2/09 *Healthy Families, Young Minds and Developing Brains: Enabling all children to reach their potential.* Charles Waldegrave & Kasia Waldegrave, May 2009.

3/10 *Passing It On: Intergenerational transmission of human capital in New Zealand families.* David Maré & Steven Stillman, February 2010.

These reports are available on the Commission's website www.nzfamilies.org.nz or contact the Commission to request copies.

Families Commission
PO Box 2839
Wellington 6140
Telephone: 04 917 7040
Email: enquiries@nzfamilies.org.nz

families commission
kōmihana ā **whānau**

> Giving New Zealand families a voice *Te reo o te whānau*

Wellington office
Public Trust Building, Level 6
117–125 Lambton Quay
PO Box 2839, Wellington 6140
Phone 04 917 7040
Fax 04 917 7059

Auckland office
Level 5, AMI House
63 Albert Street, Auckland 1010
Phone 09 985 4106

Email
enquiries@nzfamilies.org.nz

Commission website
www.nzfamilies.org.nz

The Couch website
www.thecouch.org.nz