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|  | The path to success: Career conversations with families from refugee backgrounds |

Brunswick Secondary College has a highly diverse student body. As part of the Refugee Education Support Program[[1]](#footnote-1) (RESP) the school prioritised the need to support families to better engage in career conversations with their children and with the school.

## The need

Many families with refugee backgrounds are eager to discuss career plans with their children and are anxious to make good decisions. However, these families often lack the necessary familiarity with Victoria’s complex education and training pathways, and the range of career options available in Australia. Students with refugee backgrounds are often highly ambitious in their career aspirations, but their ability to succeed in academically challenging courses is sometimes limited by their English language acquisition and proficiency, and the effects of the refugee experience. Brunswick Secondary College found that students and their families often struggled to make decisions about schools and career pathways that were in line with their expectations for the future.

## The response

Through RESP and in consultation with the Centre for Multicultural Youth, Brunswick Secondary College decided to run special, language-specific careers information workshops for families from refugee backgrounds. The school’s EAL Coordinator and Careers Counsellor worked together to adapt and translate the Department’s *Engaging Parents in Careers Conversations (EPiCC)* resource. Using the Victorian Interpreting and Translating Service, the school created booklets and activities in Persian, Somali, Arabic, Vietnamese and Mandarin; translated presentations and booked interpreters for workshops. Parents and carers attended these workshops with their children, exploring career pathways and demystifying school and training systems.

## The outcomes

For families and students:

* Parents and carers reported feeling better informed and more confident about their child’s career pathways options.
* Parents expressed relief and gratitude that the school had held these workshops especially for them.
* More students from refugee backgrounds visited the school’s Career Centre more frequently.

For the school:

* Well-developed, tailored and translated careers resources in several languages that can be used in future years.
* A positive experience and increased confidence using interpreters to deliver sessions.
* *“The EPICC framework was great to use because the slides, activities and resources could be modified to fit into the format and time the school allocated for the workshop.”* Catherine Jones, Careers Counsellor, Brunswick Secondary College

## More information

* Copies of the workshop resource booklets and the PowerPoint presentation in English and Persian are available at <http://www.brunswick.vic.edu.au/Careers/PARENTS/Pages/default.aspx>
* For information about the Victorian Interpreting and Translating Service, see <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/translateservice.aspx>
* For information about Engaging Parents in Career Conversations (EPiCC), see [www.education.vic.gov.au/epicc](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/epicc)
1. The Refugee Education Support Program is a Department of Education and Training funded initiative in partnership with Centre for Multicultural Youth and Foundation House, delivered in collaboration with Catholic Education Commission Victoria and Independent Schools Victoria. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)