

RISE ANNUAL REPORT

2012



“RISE acknowledges that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the original owners and custodians of the land that we live and work on”.

WELCOME TO THE RISE ANNUAL REPORT 2011/2012.

RISE is the first refugee and asylum seeker aid and advocacy organisation in Australia to be run and governed by refugees, asylum seekers and ex-detainees.

CEO REPORT, RAMESH FERNANDEZ

Welcome to the RISE official annual report 2011/12. Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of this land and displaced refugees and asylum seekers all around the world. Personally it was a great pleasure yet again to be part of the RISE community and I take enormous pleasure in looking at the growth of the organisation over the last three years. Not to mention, yet again, 2012 has been an astonishing year for everyone at RISE. It was a busy year with regard to both projects and advocacy. We have delivered over 15 projects this year, involving consultations with the refugee and asylum seeker community throughout Australia.

RISE has been operating these last three years without any full-time paid staff. Although I initiated RISE and have been working here since initiation, there are so many behind-the-scenes and totally committed individuals who work at RISE, almost seven days a week without a break. This is what makes our organisation so incredible. Looking at the passion and motivation of individual members of the RISE community re-affirmed for me the importance of having an organisation that is run by refugees and asylum seekers, expressly for the benefit of refugees and asylum seekers.

I was asked again, by a few philanthropists to terminate RISE's advocacy portfolio in order to gain long-term funding. I believe that is exactly similar to asking my community to not take ownership of themselves and their future and express an opinion on matters that directly affect their own lives. RISE has opinions: RISE cannot condone negativity towards refugees and asylum seekers because the organisation was created to give voice to our theoretical and practical needs in the public arena.

As an organisation we face many hurdles, including racial profiling of our community, not only from the government, but also from refugee and human-rights organisations that claim to be helpful but regrettably are contributing to further marginalising of our community. This has the effect of doubling RISE's workload with the community facing a barrage against social justice at both ends of the spectrum, not only from conservative mindsets. So far, I have noticed few organisations want us to have a voice or express our self-sustainability, because it makes certain individuals powerless and lessens the authority of the so-called “experts” in the refugee sector. We have highlighted these concerns throughout the year to those organisations and individuals. We as a refugee and asylum seeker community need to be a constant mouthpiece, a voice for sanity, reason and compassion in our world.

My personal highlight of this year was creating a Drop-In Centre, installing a Resource Library for our community and installing a recording studio. I humbly thank the entire community of volunteers, donors and most importantly all the people who believe in RISE and its growth.

FINALLY, THE VERY EXISTENCE OF RISE COMES FROM THE REFUGEE AND ASYLUM SEEKER COMMUNITY. AS YOU READ THIS ANNUAL REPORT, YOU WILL FIND OUT HOW MUCH WE HAVE ACHIEVED SO FAR, BEING FROM THE COMMUNITY OURSELVES.

RISE BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT

MERA SIVANESAN

This year has been an exciting and challenging one for RISE. We have had our busiest yet with various new projects undertaken as part of our programming and we have had over 300 volunteers and staff participating within the organisation this year - a tremendous feat.

RISE's advocacy, music and arts, settlement, and community education portfolios have all expanded, thanks to new projects such as the Cypher Hip Hop workshops, Computer Literacy workshops, ESL tutoring, African Street Theatre project, RISE Resume Clinic, RISE Resource Library, the Resisting Racism in Victoria project, and our ongoing campaign to end mandatory and indefinite immigration detention. We continue to offer our incredibly popular and much needed Driving Program, as well as our Emergency Relief Services (which includes our successful food bank). Our programming has provided practical and sought-after skills to our membership, as well as creating opportunities for members to interact with one another and become involved with the wider Australian society.

Along with all of our successes, RISE has faced difficult times this year as well. We have watched with dismay and anger as our present government has embraced the Pacific Solution once again – sending all refugees and asylum seekers who arrive by boat to the isolated, offshore processing centres of Nauru and Manus Island. We have also fought tirelessly, only to see our friends deported back to danger, as was the case with RISE member, Mr X – a Sri Lankan Tamil refugee who was fleeing torture at the hands of the Sri Lankan state, a deplorable situation.

Despite all of this, we are not disheartened and it has been a great source of inspiration and awe to watch how our dedicated staff and volunteers tackle each challenge and obstacle that comes their way. It is with this spirit of determination and passion that we look forward to the coming year and all it may bring to RISE, challenging and rewarding experiences alike.

WE WANT A SOCIETY IN WHICH REFUGEES AND ASYLUM

SEEKERS ARE WELCOME, RESPECTED, SAFE, AND IN WHICH

WE CAN FLOURISH AND ACHIEVE OUR FULL POTENTIAL

HISTORY OF RISE

RISE had its humble beginnings in the library of RMIT in January 2009 and was officially launched in March 2010. RISE is the first refugee/asylum seeker support organisation in Australia that is entirely governed by refugees, ex-detainees and asylum seekers.

RISE was established in order to increase refugee and asylum seekers' participation, to enable refugees to build new lives by providing advice, engaging in community development, enhancing opportunities and campaigning for refugee/asylum seeker rights. Soon after, many young community ambassadors and youth leaders joined the RISE team.

RISE's growth made it necessary to move: informal use of RMIT library facilities had distinct limitations. In March that same year, RISE was able to secure office space at Ross House, right in the heart of the CBD. Computers and office equipment were generously provided by different organisations and refugee community groups.

The RISE team developed a strategic response, establishing a series of outreach programs designed to cater for their specific needs and implemented using their own knowledge, experiences and expertise. The result was the creation of dynamic projects and services that encouraged fellow refugees and asylum seekers to participate fully and productively in our new land.

By creating pathways of opportunity, the RISE team has helped to sustain a more cohesive refugee community in Australia. It is with this passion and perseverance that we believe that RISE services have the potential to further enrich the lives of those seeking a new life in Australia. There is every indication that this work will not only continue but also flourish in the future.

OUR VALUES

- All our work must be guided by the aspirations and needs of refugees and their empowerment.
- We believe that successful re-settlement is best achieved by engaging refugee communities.
- In carrying out our work, we seek to facilitate partnerships between refugees and the wider community in a creative and non-competitive way.
- We seek to advance refugee rights through innovation, leadership and through delivering high quality service and evaluation.
- We enjoy the diversity of our staff and stakeholders, and promote a culture in which everyone can express their potential.

OUR AIMS

- To promote the development of refugee communities, enabling them to be active participants in wider society.
- To raise awareness of refugee issues, influence policy and campaign for refugee rights.
- To ensure that refugees and asylum seekers know their rights, their responsibilities, opportunities and choices available to them.

RISE ADVOCACY

RISE advocacy portfolio seeks to promote social change through engaging with various bodies to: advocate for refugee rights; educate the community; advance appropriate refugee policies and encourage balanced and accurate media coverage of refugee issues. The aim of the advocacy team is to generate positive political and social change in respect to attitudes and policies impacting the refugee community.\

RISE advocacy addresses issues around refugee and asylum seekers. Through this portfolio we advocate and consult on behalf of refugees and asylum seekers with the aim of improving the refugee settlement process and general national policies in dealing with refugees. RISE advocacy looks at issues to tackle improvement in the following areas:

- Refugee welfare system
- Detention policies
- Offshore Processing
- Refugee social system
- Under servicing faced by refugees
- Education provided to refugees



DETENTION WORK

SUPPORT

The policy of mandatory detention and offshore processing of boat arrivals removes procedural fairness from Australia's asylum application process. This is due to the lack of transparency and accountability as well as reduced access to legal support, communication facilities and culturally appropriate support services. This is why RISE continues to persist with the most challenging work of advocating for asylum seekers and refugees warehoused punitively in these detention centres. At the same time, we are highlighting issues to counter some of the myths and misinformation being promulgated by politicians, government officials and private subcontractors who service this burgeoning system for personal profit, while disregarding the long-term social costs.

Visits to the local detention centres were conducted with continued emphasis on connecting local cultural and religious groups in our community with those incarcerated in the detention centres and also providing support and advice to these groups on how they can best meet the needs of the detainees. RISE continues to provide items in demand such as phone cards to communicate with lawyers and family members and bilingual study materials, which are in short supply in detention centres.

Those in community detention also face similar challenges, such as not having work rights and study rights, while at the same time having to pay utility bills and daily expenses with a small allowance given to them by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. RISE's English classes and computer classes in the RISE Drop-In Centre are extremely important for these members.

ASSISTANCE WITH IMMIGRATION APPLICATIONS AND ACCESS TO LEGAL SERVICES

As stated in our last annual report, the core concern for refugees and asylum seekers inside and outside detention centres continues to be the processing of visas. Unlike most other visa processing systems, an asylum application literally saves a life, hence proper representation and support is essential to ensure a fair process that minimises risk to the asylum seeker's life. Unfortunately, the reality falls short of the ideal and the government's penchant for punishing those who arrive by boat to seek asylum contravenes the UN refugee convention.

Moreover, funding to community legal centres to provide free legal assistance to asylum seekers to access the court system, in order to challenge procedurally unfair assessments of refugee cases, has dried up over the last few months. These centres do not have the funds to obtain transcripts of refugee interviews or translation documents. We are also aware that some advocacy organisations in Melbourne have stopped providing assistance with court cases, due to the fact that resources are stretched to the limit and they are not equipped to carry out tasks that are handled by law clerks and solicitors in large private legal firms. Contrast this to the fact that the respondent (i.e. Department of Immigration and Citizenship) against whom the asylum seeker is making a case, is always represented by large, corporate legal firms.

These factors place huge demands on RISE's small but dedicated team of volunteers with no full-time paid staff. RISE is run mainly by people from the refugee community who have extremely close ties to community members with multi-lingual skills. It is they who assist in interpreting important documents and other critical information for our members; this is one way we are able to compensate this shortfall, although it is still not enough to meet a significant demand in this area.

Access to communication facilities such as computer, fax and photocopying is limited for asylum seekers in detention and outside detention many still have issues with limited access to these facilities. Those released outside the detention centre are often struggling to find steady work; or if they have found work, are still trying to pay debts incurred while being detained in Australia and/or transit countries such as Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia, or the source country itself. RISE's second-hand computer equipment and old second-hand, temperamental photocopier may seem to play a trivial part in the big picture, but do in fact impact on decisions that could result in loss of life.

January 2011 saw Afghan and Sri Lankan asylum seekers suddenly coming to the end of their processes and many have reached this stage due to poor legal representation. RISE succeeded in helping stop the life-threatening deportation of two Sri Lankan Tamil asylum seekers and found them legal representation through our networks in February 2011. Since then, more Sri Lankan and Afghan asylum seekers were able to use the same legal process to temporarily stop deportation to danger.

RISE also continued to assist detained refugees and asylum seekers with criminal cases who were quite often charged with inadequate proof. Since RISE first started, there have been, for example, a number of cases of detainees being assaulted by detention centre guards and then being charged for assault by the Australian Federal Police, placing the onus on the detainee to prove his innocence, with none of the assailants to our knowledge being brought to justice so far.

We also continued to assist refugees and asylum seekers access the internal complaints process, as well as external bodies such as the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Commonwealth Ombudsman and Amnesty International though keeping up with this in the second part of the reporting year was a challenge due to limited resources and increased number of asylum seekers being threatened with deportation and other emergency issues that our small team had to respond to in real time.

The refugee issue is not a national or "regional" issue - it is a global issue. In addition to work in Australia, RISE has been able to use contacts in other countries to provide legal assistance and advocate for some of our members' families or friends who have been unjustly charged and/or detained in transition countries or their source countries, as well as assisting those applying from other countries for a protection or humanitarian visa in Australia.

SUBMISSIONS AND GOVERNMENT ADVOCACY

Systemic change is essential to creating a sustainable future for the community. In August 2011, RISE made a submission to a Parliamentary inquiry into "Australia's Immigration Detention Network, management, resourcing, potential expansion, possible alternative solutions, the Government's detention values, and the effect of detention on detainees". Just before this inquiry ended, the government made an announcement that they would release a number of detained asylum seekers and refugees on bridging visas, with work rights and study rights.

The very first group was released around December 2011, and many did and continue to visit us at our Drop-In-Centre to seek assistance or simply to touch base with the community. The submission also built on an earlier submission (made in February 2011) regarding refugees detained indefinitely due to adverse ASIO security assessments with no right to see the reasons for these assessments and any right to review. The parliamentary detention inquiry committee made recommendations that laws relating to ASIO assessments of refugees be changed.

TRAINING AND CO-ORDINATION OF VOLUNTEERS

Our training and supervision of volunteers continued, with supervised visits to the detention centres as part of the induction of volunteers into the advocacy team. This too adds to the burden on our small team, with significant strain on our resources due to the above mentioned demands placed by the shifting and changing political climate and reactionary policies implemented by the ruling party of the time. However, RISE places the safety and self-empowerment of those we advocate for as the topmost priority and hence we do not compromise on the selection and training of our volunteers in this area.

SUPPORT SERVICES

The RISE support service has been organised in way that not only encourages refugee participation in the accessing of services, but also empowers individuals to take ownership over important aspects of their lives. We hope that this is a unique and practical model and that it will serve as an example for other organisations that wish to achieve similar objectives.

HOUSING

Housing affordability is a major concern for all Australians. However it is important to remember that new migrants and refugee communities are among the most disadvantaged when it comes to accessing safe and affordable accommodation to meet their basic needs.

The limited number of available public and social housing for large families' means many refugees and new arrivals are forced to compete for homes in the private rental market, in spite of their inherent economic disadvantage and limited knowledge of the vagaries of the private market place. Likewise, due to their inherent disadvantages, many are forced to move to regional areas away from the city centre. This situation often presents itself with more challenges, such as a shortage of available jobs, access to healthcare services and suitable educational or employment opportunities.

Since its establishment, RISE has been working closely with a number of families and individuals to address their housing issues. RISE has worked closely with HomeGround in Fitzroy and Office of Housing and others to address this problem and find solutions. RISE has secured affordable accommodations and permanent housing for asylum seekers in Australia.

EMPLOYMENT

The workshops were set up to balance the short-term and long-term needs of the refugees and complement some of the programs set up by government agencies.

Our employment services aim to empower refugees and asylum seekers by helping them to integrate with the wider community, allowing them to contribute to the community, enabling them to gain financial independence and giving them the opportunity to prove their abilities. Due to increases in refugee population, as well as lack of complimentary services, refugees and asylum seekers often have very narrow pathways to employment. In some cases, even after a year of living in Australia, these individuals do not have resumes to begin their

search for employment. In response, we offered services such as writing up resumes, preparing cover letters, advice, techniques and sources for job search, job application assistance and preparation for interviews.

LEGAL SUPPORT

RISE case workers worked with different law firms around the country on behalf of refugees regarding fines, incidents, family matters, civil and law suits.

RISE case workers have also expressed uncertainty about the refugee welfare system and its function in relation to refugee families, youth and adults. In response to these concerns, we developed a toolkit as a practical resource that benefits the refugee community. RISE assisted many asylum seekers who received their visa from Christmas Island and other refugee camps, or for those who may have lost or left behind their documents, in locating them and contacting the appropriate departments and services, including UNHCR.

DRIVING PROJECT

The RISE driving project is run by a diverse group of refugee community volunteers. The project identified and addressed the needs and concerns of the local community regarding road safety, including raising driver awareness about drink driving and education about existing road rules. It is in the public interest to have safe, competent drivers on our roads, as much as it is important for individuals to have increased mobility.

While regular driving schools conducted the practical lessons, the more theoretical components of driving lessons, such as passing the learner's permit test, were facilitated by RISE volunteers. This year RISE driving project covered more than 33 suburbs, including rural areas, with over 50 participants. By involving RISE volunteers in the project, RISE aims to strengthen their skills by virtue of the various leadership roles in the driving program.

STORIES

“ A young Iraqi man who was not eligible for the governmental refugee benefits, based on his visa category, was referred to our driving project. RISE provided free instruction; he successfully completed his lessons and gained his “P” licence. ”

“ A newly arrived single mother, who was struggling to pay her driving lesson fees, gained her drivers’ licence from the RISE driving project. She found a job within two weeks after she gained the licence and within one month she bought her own car. ”

“ An Eritrean mother with three children, who was unable to pay for driving lessons, was referred to RISE. She completed her driving lessons and gained her “P” licence successfully. ”

RESUME CLINIC

Many of our members have found a sense of empowerment through securing employment opportunities with assistance from our employment services division. The team has been able to provide members with an array of job services, including job-search training, resume-writing clinics, pathways to vocational training or further study, interview training and career advice.

Given that a great number of our members had never documented their skills and experience before, having effective resumes especially written for them helped to reinforce their strengths, while opening the door to employment in Australia. Through our resume-writing clinics, our team worked keenly to establish each member's personal strengths, experience and extra-curricular activities before helping them to put together comprehensive resumes. Depending on our members' experience, resume-writing clinics have been followed up by enrolment into a vocational course or an exciting volunteer placement, all very helpful before members are able to acquire a suitable job.

Through networking with various employers and recruitment agencies, we have been able to ease the process for many of our members. While many were able to obtain a job through assisted applications, others secured remarkable opportunities by using the very skills introduced through our training to approach employers directly and to use networks of their own.

This year, our budding employment services division has been able to assist more than 80 refugee members. Our success stories include the following:

“ A refugee member has been employed as a baker for two months after attending our resume-writing clinic.

He had more than five years of experience at a bakery in Sri Lanka.

“ Another refugee member with remarkable English skills was able to obtain a job in his line of work – building, repairing and maintaining fibreglass boats. He was highly experienced and had been working in the industry for more than 20 years.

FOOD BANK

The RISE Food Bank provides free dry food, fruits and vegetables for asylum seekers and refugees. It aims to meet the dietary needs of people in community detention and those who are not receiving any support or social assistance from the government, due to their visa status.

EMERGENCY RELIEF SERVICES

Our Welfare/Emergency relief services helped RISE members with critical settlement needs. Our involvement across these areas is to provide direct assistance by way various resources including: food/shopping vouchers; furniture; clothes; electrical equipment; books and homewares, all designed to help refugees establish their new lives in Australia. RISE staff also act as a go-between, advocating and facilitating migrant needs in dealing with relevant governmental departments and our NGO partners.



MUSIC AND ARTS

The aim of RISE music and arts project is to reduce social isolation within the refugee community and help youth re-engage into wider society through various forms of artistic expression. Furthermore, our music and arts projects act as a medium for us to engage with the wider community through events and festivals that showcase the various talents and cultural assets refugees possess.

POETRY WORKSHOPS:

December 2011, RISE was proud to host the incomparable artist from US, Amir Sulaiman. RISE ran a workshop hosted by Amir in which 30 youths from the community received first-hand tutelage in the art of poetry. The two main principles Mr Sulaiman instilled in his starry-eyed students was that with any piece that they produce, be it poetry or music, beauty and sincerity should always be the driving force behind their works. RISE also organised a concert with Amir Sulaiman and with well-known Australian artists at Miss Libertine. The night was a huge success, with a well-contented crowd to boot.

CYPHER PROJECT

The Cipher Project is a new initiative that facilitates youth empowerment through assistance in song writing, recording, instrumentation, performance and sound production classes. Furthermore, we used conscience hip-hop and discussions around social, legal, educational, health and well-being issues to educate, inspire and empower young people with the skills and confidence to develop a positive self-image, realise their potential, aspire to fulfil their dreams, and contribute positively to society. The Cipher Project featured inclusive, interactive, hands-on workshops that will equip participants with skills and knowledge of the core elements of hip-hop. Participants had the opportunity to express freely, openly and creatively their own identities, opinions and experiences through the creation of rhymes, beats, videos and dance.

This project provided young people with a unique opportunity to express themselves creatively, to explore their ideas and perspectives within a positive and supportive environment.

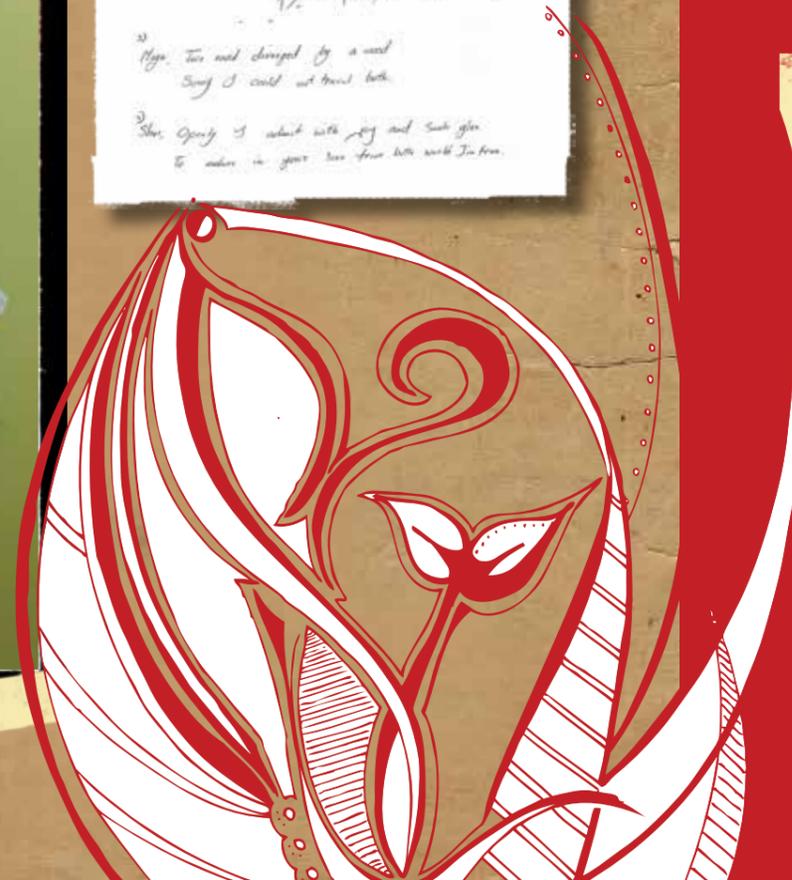
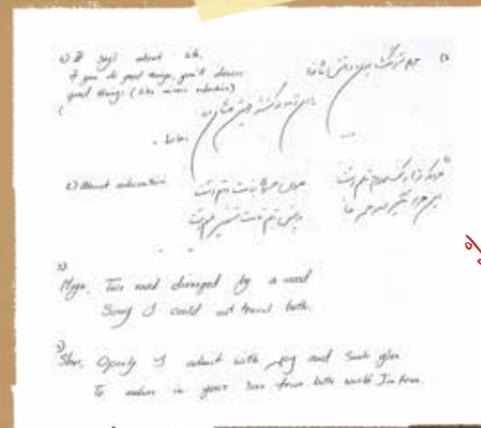
RECORDING STUDIO

RISE music studio is a facility for participants to learn how to record their own songs, as well as sound production, beat making, mastering, and audio mixing. Individuals and groups were shown how to produce their own songs and sound tracks; instrumentation was also explored. A key aspect of RISE's music studio is that participants were given the opportunity to learn about the process of recording, in addition to writing their own songs in a safe environment.

The ultimate aim of the program is to empower young people from a migrant and refugee background by developing their abilities for creative expression and communication. Moreover, this process of self-representation, speaking and listening, will also build their leadership capacities. The project has clearly increased cultural awareness and provided opportunities for social interaction.

From RISE consultations with migrant and refugee communities, one of the most common needs identified by young people is for their voice to be heard, recognised and acknowledged in addressing various challenges they face. As such, this program is aimed at empowering participants with the knowledge, skills and practical tools to express their own personalities positively, within the context of their environment.

With limited representation of young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds in the mainstream media, it is vital to facilitate spaces where young creative people can express themselves, their identities, culture and heritage. Therefore, RISE endeavours to create opportunities for positive self-representation and to develop leadership skills, bringing with it a sense of inclusion, belonging and social responsibility within Australian society.



RISE EDUCATION

RISE EDUCATION

RISE educational programs are set to create opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers to meet their educational needs by offering a space to study, by setting up educational components, as well as by providing advice and personalised guidance about the various computer, literacy, and education pathways available.

RISE TUTORING

The new RISE Tutoring program began in March 2012 with the aim of assisting members with their conversational and written English. RISE's tutoring program utilises a curriculum set by a Language Leader. Classes involve tutors sitting with students individually and working through exercises from the AMES Good, Better, Best! series, followed by speaking exercises.

RISE's tutoring program for refugees and asylum seekers fills a gap in the community - it is a pre-intermediate program, run by volunteers and qualified teachers, targeting students with some English language skills so that they will be able to advance to the level required to interact effectively with the wider Australian society; it is aimed to help students obtain employment or to further their studies.

Classes conducted in the city at RISE's Melbourne CBD Drop-In Centre are cost-free for students, and are held for two hours every Saturday for 48 weeks (broken into four terms). Students are identified and recommended through RISE's casework program. Other organisations are also able to refer students to the program. Class size is initially restricted to 15 students to maximise the effectiveness for participants.

RISE plans to further expand the ESL program and recruit more volunteers to accommodate the demand for English teaching. We also hope to develop a Homework Club by the end of 2012, to assist children and adolescents of asylum seeker and refugee background with their schoolwork and VCE exams.

SEXUAL HEALTH WORKSHOPS

From May-June 2012, RISE's Community Education Program ran a series of workshops on sexual health with twenty Young Adult Migrant Education Course (YAMEC) students at NMIT's Collingwood campus. The students came from a wide variety of cultural and religious backgrounds. Countries of origin included Afghanistan, Cambodia, China, Colombia, Eritrea and Somalia.

RISE's sexual health workshops tackled issues such as sexuality, reproductive anatomy, contraception, STIs, sex and gender in the media, gender stereotyping, sexual consent, sexual violence and sexual diversity.

Utilising group discussion, film, music, case scenarios and role-playing, students, RISE volunteers and facilitators examined numerous aspects of sexual health. Guest speakers also visited the workshops, helping to facilitate discussion and introduce the students to other services in the metropolitan Melbourne region.

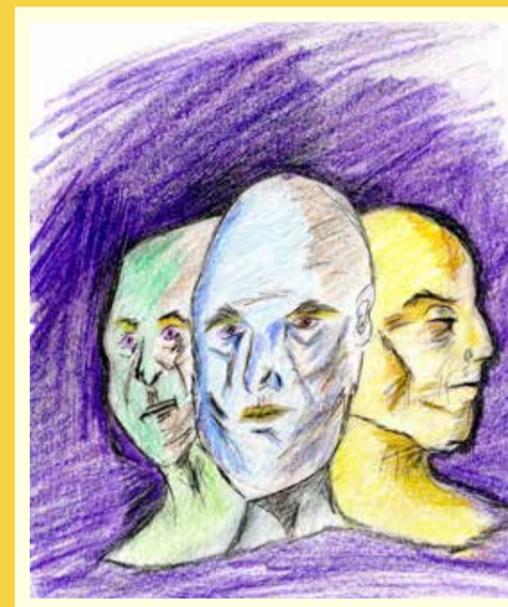
The final workshop brought the students to Ross House in the Melbourne CBD where RISE is based. All students received a certificate of completion for their work and they, along with RISE volunteers and facilitators, wrapped up the sessions sharing food, laughs and a tour of the RISE Drop-In Centre and office.

COMPUTER CLASSES

Computers find a wide variety of applications in different spheres of life. With an increase in their widespread use and their ever-so-increasing popularity, computer education has become the need of the day. Only computer education can ensure the use of computers for successful communication and entertainment.

Computer knowledge, coupled with certain other job skills, increases one's chances of getting a job. Those with knowledge of computers are considered trainable for many kinds of jobs. As most jobs involve the use of computers, computer education is a basic requirement for successful entry into modern-day employment.

The participants in this program obtained many benefits and have enjoyed their computer training. They have been provided with computer study materials, supplemented with pictorial presentations, which make for easier understanding. As part of the training program, they have taken part in a number of assessments for which they obtained satisfactory results, thus gaining confidence in handling computers.



“
It was a good learning experience and I have a certificate now.
”

DICTIONARY PROJECT

RISE has been working with detainees since its establishment. The RISE Dictionary project was tailored to serve one of the most underserved community groups in Australia. The project was created in response to requests from detainees and asylum seekers of all backgrounds, including adults, youths and young children, both male and female.

Over 7000 non-English speaking asylum seekers, including approximately 1500 children, are in Australian managed detention centers for one to two years. Asylum seekers are kept in detention without adequate educational support or welfare assistance from the government. This often results in physiological deterioration and social dysfunction. This is typically compounded by language and communication barriers faced by the detainees, due to an ineffective educational infrastructure within the detention centers. The RISE Dictionary project was created to fill this glaring need. We collected dictionaries and all appropriate educational materials for distribution among the various detention centres, enabling detainees to develop their language skills.

Furthermore, the project has helped alleviate feelings of social withdrawal and isolation experienced by asylum seekers due to limited opportunities to occupy their time. For instance, in the Christmas Island detention centre there were over 2000 detainees sharing one dictionary over 12 months. This initiative increased language and communication skills of the detainees and boosted their confidence and interpersonal skills. This ultimately aided them in expressing and articulating their concerns to case workers and aid agencies, for example, Amnesty International, Red Cross and Human Rights organizations.

RESISTING RACISM IN VICTORIA

Initiated in 2011 and continuing on through to 2013, the Resisting Racism in Victoria (RRV) project aims to equip our members, as well as the wider public, about the issues of racism and racialisation. Based on our own experiences of racism, in addition to those of our wider membership, we believe there is an immediate and urgent need to arm all racialised Victorian community groups with the knowledge and skills to resist racism. We have also identified a startling need for organisations that come into regular contact with racialised communities to be equipped with the skills to identify and minimize, if not eradicate, racism within their various institutions.

The RISE RRV project is comprised of four components, including:

- The RISE Resource Library, which was launched in late 2011;
- RRV Professional Anti-Racism Training for Organisations;
- RRV Public Anti-Racism Workshops;
- The Resisting Racism in Victoria Conference.

Our professional training and public workshops are going to be delivered in 2012-2013, along with the inaugural Resisting Racism in Victoria Conference, which will bring together people who have been actively and creatively building communities and resisting racism, both in Australia and overseas.

RISE RESOURCE LIBRARY

In December 2011, RISE launched its own library as part of the RISE Drop-In Centre, located in our CBD office. The library is a component of another RISE project undertaken this year, entitled Resisting Racism in Victoria. Like its parent project, the RISE Resource Library operates under a mandate to facilitate resistance to racism by providing its members with access to a wide variety of factual, critical and alternative materials.

The library was launched with special guest speakers, including television and radio presenter, Namila Benson and comedian Aamer Rahman, who spoke of the necessity of stories that affirm and celebrate our diverse identities. The library aims to strengthen and foster positive representations of our communities as well as provide our communities with space to better understand our diverse histories so that we have the foundations for a sustainable and positive future.

The library also contains a settlement component that includes resources for facilitating members' settlement in Australia. Resources include English language instruction books, high school study aides, resume-writing guides, as well as RISE's own settlement service book.

The RISE Resource Library currently has over 800 resources in its catalogue and a membership of more than 60 people. Our programming includes a book club that meets in person and online, as well as upcoming author readings and film screenings.



RISE DROP-IN CENTRE

The RISE Drop-In Centre for both youth and adults in the community provides social opportunities for newly arrived migrants and refugees to meet and thereby create social support networks through art and recreational activities. At the hub, members will have access to the RISE library and be able to participate in organised recreational activities.

The Drop-In Centre offers arts activities, such as music, drama and visual arts. These focus on broad themes, which allow participants the opportunity to explore creative outlets (including poetry and creative writing) as well as celebrating and sharing cultures. In the future, the participants will be able to share in a residential workshop, or if this is not possible, an end-of-workshop gathering.

Participants can work towards achieving Young People's Arts Awards and will be involved in public performances and exhibitions. These activities will showcase their work, improve their self-confidence, and celebrate their achievements. Some participants in the project will go on to develop skills as facilitators and workshop leaders.

RISE PROJECT MANAGER REPORT

WALEED MUSSA

RISE creates innovative projects and tailored services to address the needs and overcome the various barriers faced by refugees and asylum seekers. All our services are informed by the knowledge, experiences and expertise we bring as refugees and are constructed after extensive community consultation and due diligence.

RISE Advocacy services are there to campaign on our members' behalf to improve government refugee and asylum-seeker policies. We also seek to generate positive social change with respect to attitudes and policies impacting refugees and asylum seekers. Our case management team provides direct assistance with lawyers; they in turn represent asylum claims by sourcing legal support, helping gather information, the tracing of documents, lodging complaints against any cases of mistreatment in detention and prevent illegitimate deportation.

RISE settlement services seek to help in addressing the initial critical settlement needs of refugees. Our involvement across these areas is as a go-between, advocating and facilitating migrant needs with relevant governmental departments, bilateral agencies and our NGO partners.

RISE music and arts project aims to reduce social isolation within the refugee community and help youth re-engage into wider society through various forms of artistic expression. Furthermore, our music and arts projects act as a medium for us to engage with the wider community through events and festivals. These enable us to showcase the various talents and cultural assets that refugees possess.

We are looking forward to 2013 and will seek to consolidate our rapid growth, deepen our relationships and drive long-term outcomes from our projects and services. To facilitate this, we will set up a 360-degree monitoring and evaluation framework to ensure that RISE projects are achieving their social impact goals and addressing community and stakeholder needs.



FINANCIAL REPORT

Statement of Comprehensive Income

	2012	2011
	\$	\$
Revenue	138,689	74,194
Other income	2,155	2,985
Administration expenses	(6,685)	(3,959)
Occupancy expenses	(18,502)	(10,894)
Project expenses	(99,798)	(61,266)
Other expenses	(3)	-
Profit before income tax	<u>15,856</u>	<u>1,060</u>
Income tax expense	-	-
Profit for the year	<u><u>15,856</u></u>	<u><u>1,060</u></u>
Total comprehensive income for the year	<u><u>15,856</u></u>	<u><u>1,060</u></u>

Statement of Financial Position

	2012	2011
	\$	\$
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	55,146	22,046
Other	782	1,624
Total Current Assets	<u>55,928</u>	<u>23,670</u>
Total Assets	<u>55,928</u>	<u>23,670</u>
Current Liabilities		
Other	25,902	9,500
Total Current Liabilities	<u>25,902</u>	<u>9,500</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>25,902</u>	<u>9,500</u>
Net Assets	<u><u>30,026</u></u>	<u><u>14,170</u></u>
Equity		
Retained earnings	30,026	14,170
Total Equity	<u><u>30,026</u></u>	<u><u>14,170</u></u>

These abridged financial statements are prepared from the full audited financial statements. A detailed copy of the audited financial statements are available on request.

RISE MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE.

RISE MANAGEMENT

Gulius Kogoya (Secretary)
Mathavan Parameswaran (Accountant)
Mera Sivanesan (Director)
Ramesh Fernandez (CEO and Founder)
Rano Sangwan (Director)
Waleed Mussa (Program Manager)
Madhuni Kumarakulasinghe (Advocacy and Campaign Manager)
Sally Saadeldin (Arts Manager)
Jayani Nadarajalingham (RRV Project manager)

RISE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Aamer Rhaman (Youth Worker)
Belinda Lo (Lawyer of Eastern Community Legal Centre)
Eugenia Flynn (Contemporary freelance arts manager)
Faten Mohamed (Secretary of African Think Tank)
Patrick Marks (Music producer)
Sanmati Verma (Solicitor of Clothier Anderson & Associates)

PROJECT COORDINATORS AND ADMINISTRATION TEAM

Deen Mohamed	Rachael Bongiorno
Diirshe Abdullahi	Sara Mussa
Dominic Golding	Tania Canas
Ferial Glaid	Rekha Patadiya
Harrison	Naveera Ahmed
John Deng	Daniela Umbalo
Leonor Ordonez	Arlene Francia
Lina Haratuwa	Varuni Murugadasan
Mostafa Haroun	

TECHNOLOGY AND MARKETING

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Patrick Donelan
Rakesh Rachamalla

ART WORKS BY

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Bree Hankinson (Design)
Lauren Zarina Thomas
Refugees Art Network

RISE EDITORS

Ross Campbell
Shiyavanthi Johnpillai

SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL THE 400+ VOLUNTEERS

OUR SUPPORTERS

Al Ghazali Center
ANZ
Australian Community Foundation
Australian Community Foundation
Helen Macpherson Smith Trust
Lord Mayor Charitable
Mercy Foundation
Poetry Workshops
Re-Ross Trust
Scanlon Foundation
SecondBite
Streetsmart



SUPPORTING RISE

RISE is a Tax deductible organization and your financial support helps us to enable refugees to build new lives in Australia in which they can flourish and achieve their fullest potential. We operate with some of the most underserved members of our society, and in areas which are grossly underserved. To respond to this need, we need your financial support.

To donate to RISE contact us on admin@riserefugee.org
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