



FINAL REPORT

Recipient:

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The Australian National University Centre for the Public Awareness of Science

Project:

Opening Doors: Science Engagement Tours for Young Refugee Migrants Residing in Goulburn (Ref: US010055)

Funding:

Inspiring Australia – Unlocking Australia’s Potential Funding \$4,460.00 (GST Excl.)

Reporting Period:

Final Report – 14 May 2012 to 01 December 2012

Acknowledgement

As the Inspiring Australia funded phase of the Opening Doors project draws to a close, I would like to gratefully acknowledge the financial support by Inspiring Australia – Unlocking Australia’s Potential, and I thank the Inspiring Australia Officers; viz.

Mr Dominic O’Connor, Mr Simon France, Ms Anh Nguyen, and Dr Milli Styles.

The Inspiring Australia funded phase of the Opening Doors project would not have been possible without the contribution of the ANU Student Equity Office, especially Ms Caitlin Winter (Project Officer), in developing and implementing the activities undertaken by this grant.

I especially thank Ms Charlotte Butler, Client Services Coordinator at the Goulburn Multicultural Centre, for tirelessly making input to the science tours for Goulburn-based young refugee migrants.

Section A: Project Summary

Description of the Project

Opening Doors is a pioneering project that offers young migrants from refugee backgrounds access to science engagement in Australia. The project offers participants opportunities to access a range of science communication activities that include visits to science centres, museums, and science shows, as well as information about tertiary studies and careers in science. The project acknowledges the diversity within and among young migrant groups from refugee backgrounds, and evaluates their attitudes and aspirations with regard to Australian scientific culture during their settlement in Australia. Website: <http://openingdoors.anu.edu.au/>

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Summary of activities undertaken funded by the Inspiring Australia grant

A group of up to thirty young (15-25yo) refugee migrants from Goulburn travelled to Canberra on two separate days during the Spring school holidays (i.e. 24 September and 2 October). They participated in a range of science engagement programs offered by Questacon, the CSIRO Discovery Centre, Geoscience Australia, The Australian National University, Canberra Reptile Centre, Canberra Walk-in Aviary and the National Dinosaur Museum. The participants' feedback was evaluated through surveys and interviews. Steps to continue and sustain the Goulburn participants' science engagement, that was initiated through the Inspiring Australia funded science tours to Canberra, have been undertaken successfully.

Outcomes to date

As it was stated in the original project proposal to Inspiring Australia, the Opening Doors Science Engagement Tours for young refugee migrants residing in Goulburn aimed to sustain links between regionally based migrant groups and mainstream science engagement in Australia, while drawing on existing science engagement resources.

- Pre-tour visits to Goulburn:

In order to facilitate contact with the young refugee migrant community in Goulburn, working partnerships were developed with the ANU Student Equity Office and the Goulburn Multicultural Centre.

The ANU Student Equity Office works in collaboration with schools in low socioeconomic areas to develop and implement a range of programs designed to increase awareness and understanding about higher education and to enhance academic outcomes. Website: <http://drss.anu.edu.au/student-equity>

The Goulburn Multicultural Centre is the central hub which offers migrant settlement and support to the large refugee community in Goulburn. Website: www.gmc.org.au

Visits in the months of June, August and September 2012 were made to Goulburn, in conjunction with staff from the ANU Student Equity Office, to coincide with social recreation activities organised for the participants by the Goulburn Multicultural Centre. During these visits the participants were introduced to activities (that were soon to be undertaken) as part of the Science Tours to Canberra.

- Pre-tour meetings with ANU Student Equity Ambassadors:

Meetings for Student Ambassadors were convened by the ANU Student Equity Office on 20 July and 4 September 2012. These Student Ambassadors are ANU student volunteers, recruited specifically from science undergraduate students at ANU and trained in cross-cultural communication with an objective to raise awareness about university aspirations among disadvantaged students in Australian regional high schools. During, both days of the Science Tours to Canberra, the Student Ambassadors played a key role in facilitating informal interactions with the participants from Goulburn, by providing insights into studying science at university as well as discussions about their university experiences and aspirations about science careers.

- Logistical arrangements:

Several aspects of the Science Tours required advanced coordination. These included bus-hire to transport the Goulburn participants to and within Canberra, bookings and reservations of the respective science venues, as well as show-bag contents, souvenirs and take-home information for the participants.

In addition, science communicators from ANU; for example, Centre for the Public

Awareness of Science and Robogals as well as the College of Science Marketing and Recruitment Office, were invited to present debriefings to the participants about studying science at university.

Several months prior to the visits, contact was made with science venue staff at Questacon, CSIRO Discovery Centre, Geoscience Australia, Canberra Reptile Centre, Canberra Aviary and National Dinosaur Museum, to discuss the science communication requirements of the target audience. As advised in the Grant Offer Letter “partnerships/discount arrangements with science engagement venues” were sought to minimise entry costs. I wish to thank Questacon and the CSIRO Discovery Centre for waiving their admissions fees.

It should also be mentioned here that the original budget estimated for meals was not sufficient to professionally cater for the participants’ specific (especially, religion-based) dietary requests for morning and afternoon teas. In order to contain expenses with the budget, therefore, pre-prepared foodstuff was purchased and presented personally to the participants during morning and afternoon teas.

- Day 1 of Canberra Science Tours (24 September 2012):

10.00am (Delayed) arrival of bus from Goulburn to Canberra
 10.30am Geoscience Australia Education Centre – hands-on learning activities
 11.30am Early lunch at Lake Burley Griffin
 12.15pm Questacon - Selected Galleries: Excite@Q, Awesome Earth, H₂O
 02.15pm CSIRO Discovery Centre & Tour of CSIRO Facilities
 04.00pm ANU Debriefing with afternoon tea
 05.00pm Bus back to Goulburn

- Day 2 of Canberra Science Tours (02 October 2012):

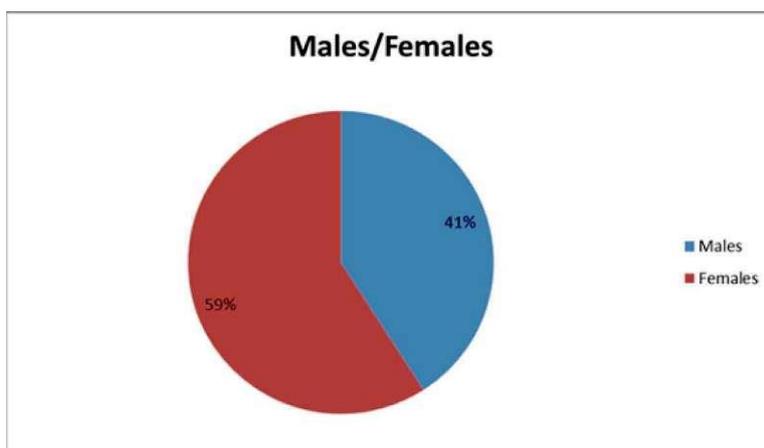
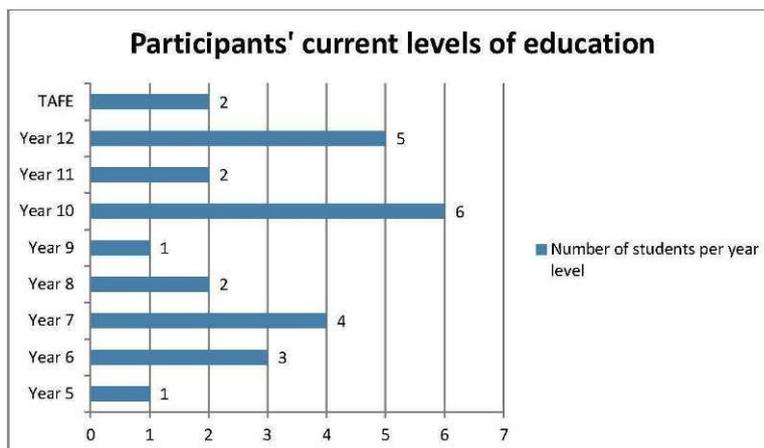
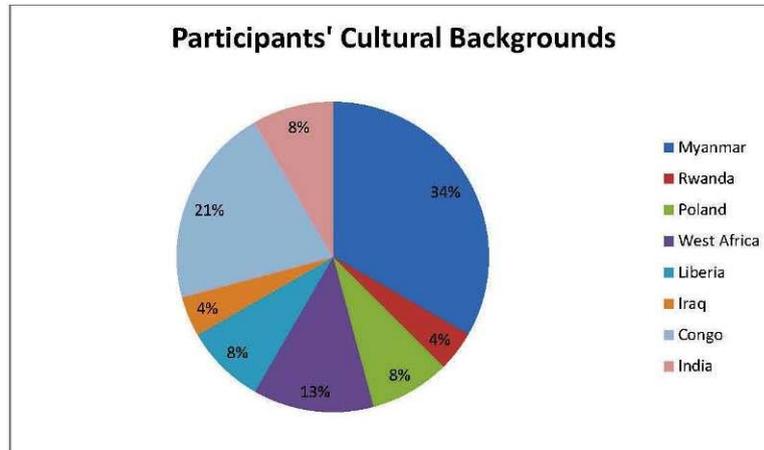
09.00am Arrival of bus from Goulburn to Canberra
 09.30am Arrive at Gold Creek Village and Morning tea
 10.00am National Dinosaur Museum Tour
 11.45am Walk-in Aviary - Tour and Worksheet
 12.45pm Lunch on lawns outside Cockington Green
 01.30pm Reptile Centre Visit
 04.00pm ANU Debriefing with afternoon tea followed by Presentation of Certificates
 05.00pm Bus back to Goulburn

In order to sustain the links that were developed through the Inspiring Australia funded Science Engagement Tours in Canberra, several successful initiatives were established with the Goulburn-based young refugee migrant group. These activities include:

- (a) Post-tour visits to Goulburn – Day-trips to Goulburn were undertaken to meet and spend time with the young refugee migrants who participated in the science tours. These visits were used to provide information about studies and careers in science.
- (b) Science Photo Contest – Further to an introduction to science photography, which the participants received during their visits to Canberra, a Science Photo Contest was organised in collaboration with the Goulburn Multicultural Centre on 20 November at Mcdermott Community Centre in Goulburn. The participants and their families together with members of the Goulburn public attended the event which showcased the participants’ attempts at science photography. The two best photographs were judged and prizes were awarded to the contestants.

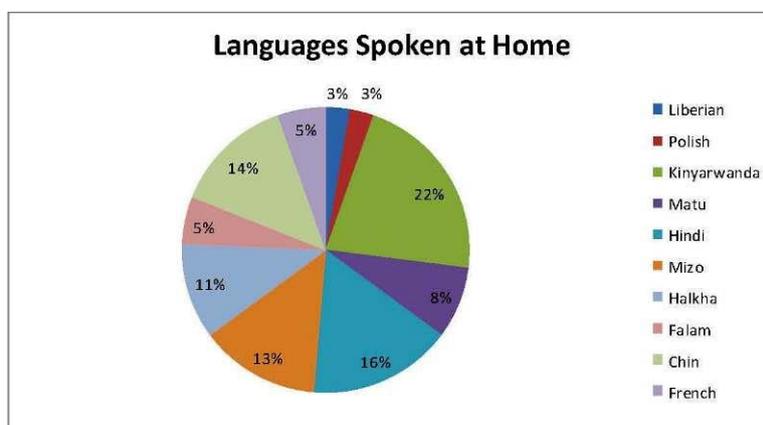
Target Audience

Participants of the Inspiring Australia funded Science Engagement Tours were recruited with input from the Goulburn Multicultural Centre. In total, thirty-five young refugee migrants expressed interest in the program and on each day of the Science Tours up to thirty participants attended. A breakdown of the participants' demographic information has been compiled by the ANU Office of Student Equity and is presented below.



Evaluation

The participation of the young refugee migrants who attended the Inspiring Australia funded Science Engagement Tours was evaluated through post-visit surveys and interviews about their experiences. In both these instances, the input by the ANU Student Equity volunteer Ambassadors was instrumental in obtaining feedback, especially in the case of participants with limited English language skills. As the figure below shows, the participants' first languages were significantly diverse.



Analysis of the participants' feedback revealed that 67% developed positive attitudes to science, while 13% saw career prospects in science. However, as two of the participants are quoted below, there stills appears to be an apprehension about learning science in Australia, particularly at tertiary level.

“I love science, it makes you think and discover things... But I am really nervous because I didn't know what university life would be like or how to get into university in Australia.”

“Science fun and important... But I can't do science in Australia because it's really hard.”

These, and similar, responses suggest a greater need for efforts (like the Inspiring Australia funded phase of the Opening Doors Project) to inspire young refugee migrants about possible opportunities to study and seek careers in science in Australia (as recommended by the Inspiring Australia Expert Working Group Report).

In terms of the science venues the participants visited, Geoscience Australia Education Centre and Canberra Reptile Centre ranked the most popular. While the visit to the CSIRO Discovery Centre registered the least popularity, the participants related positively their experiences at Questacon, the Dinosaur Museum and the Walk-in Aviary. The hands-on activities with rock specimens at Geoscience Australia, and the Earthquake House at Questacon were recorded as most memorable experiences by many of the participants.

Section B: Promotional Materials and Publicity

All methods of promotion and publicity acknowledged explicitly “Inspiring Australia – Unlocking Australia’s Potential” for funding the two days of visits to science venues and associated activities that were undertaken by the Opening Doors Science Engagement Tours for Young Refugee Migrants Residing in Goulburn:

- During the pre-tour visits to Goulburn and at the presentation of certificates to the participants, the funding provided by Inspiring Australia and its goals to inspire science studies and careers was explained by Ms Caitlin Winter to the participants in simple language comprehensible to ESL speakers.
- The Inspiring Australia - Unlocking Australia’s Potential weblink was linked to all relevant webpages of the Opening Doors website: openingdoors.anu.edu.au
- Inspiring Australia promotional material, for example, the IA Banner, name badges, information brochures, flyers, etc. were made available at all relevant Opening Doors Science Engagement Tours events, and a representative from the Inspiring Australia Office in Canberra was invited to officiate at the certificate presentation to participants at ANU (02 October 2012).
- In addition, the following media outputs acknowledged the funding by Inspiring Australia – Unlocking Australia’s Potential towards the Science Engagement Tours: ABC Radio Queensland interview (02 October 2012), Goulburn Post news article (28 September 2012); and The Conversation online news Hot Topics linked the Science Engagement Tours to an announcement by Australia’s Chief Scientists to “infiltrate every corner of our community with people who were educated in the scientific method and end up using that method in a whole variety of careers.” (08 October 2012).

Section C : Financial Report (Withheld)

Section D: Issues/Highlights/Follow up

Further to the successful completion of the Opening Doors Science Engagement Tours to Canberra, several pioneering initiatives were established with the Goulburn-based young refugee migrant group. The post-tour visits to Goulburn and the Science Photo Contest have already been mentioned. Further follow up activities will include:

- (a) Offering the participants the opportunity to re-experience (with their families) certain aspects of the program by donations of return passes to visit Questacon and the Reptile Centre.
- (b) Maintaining an online presence through the Opening Doors website for Science Engagement Tour participants to find out about science studies and careers in Australia.
- (c) Continuing to share information with the participants (via the Goulburn

Multicultural Centre) by presenting show-bags and follow-up information from the science venues visited during the tours, for example, the National Dinosaur Museum's evolutionary timeline information sheet.

(d) Working with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship Settlement Program to promote science communication as a settlement strategy for recently arrived young refugee migrants in Australia.

(e) Setting up an Astronomy Club in Goulburn with input from Mount Stromlo Observatory in Canberra, and by advancing further the good working partnership that has been developed with the ANU Student Equity Office and the Student Ambassadors.

(f) Applying for a National Science Week Grant to enable science-enthusiastic young refugee migrants from Goulburn to visit to Mount Stromlo Observatory and the Canberra Deep Space Communication Complex in Tidbinbilla during Science Week 2013.

Final report prepared by:

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