



Settlement Council of Australia

AT A GLANCE



Target Participants

People from refugee backgrounds in NSW.



Aim

To deliver new education and career opportunities to refugees and migrants.



Organisations Involved

Allianz Australia, Settlement Services International (SSI)



Location

NSW



Funding

Allianz Australia, with some contributions from individual donors.

CASE STUDY

SSI and Allianz Australia Partnership

Allianz Australia and SSI's award-winning partnership has been delivering new education and career opportunities for refugees and migrants since 2016. It is a holistic partnership, with co-designed programs across a wide range of activities that also directly engages and connects hundreds of Allianz staff with the settlement journey.

One aspect of the partnership is the scholarship program created to minimise the financial barriers experienced by refugees as they participate in the NSW education system. Over five years, 177 scholarships with a combined value of over \$400,000 have been granted.

Additionally, 32 refugees have been supported into permanent employment with Allianz in a variety of skilled roles across Finance, Human Resources, Claims, IT, Underwriting, Workers Compensation, and Marketing. The Allianz Ladder program is a training and work experience program that supports refugees with work readiness and soft skills development, and into cadet positions in the aforementioned areas. The employment program is not simply a temporary work placement but recruits newcomers into permanent employment from day one.



Allianz Australia, Managing Director, Richard Feledy said, “Our relationship with SSI is part of our commitment to continually contribute to an inclusive society. One in which all people – no matter their culture, background, or ability – feel valued. Importantly, one in which individuals have the opportunity to access equal education or progress their careers, and to use their unique skills and reach their full personal or professional goals.”

Over the years Allianz has also supported SSI through corporate volunteering, as a sponsor of its New Beginnings Arts and Culture Festival, and internal fundraising.

The Allianz and SSI partnership has been recognised by the Australian Human Rights Commission. In 2017 it was awarded the Australian Human Rights Commission Business Award.

Challenges

The program has the following challenges:

- **Extending the eligibility criteria for people in Australia on temporary visas seeking asylum.** During the design and implementation stage of the scholarship program, government policies limited entitlements and services for asylum seekers on temporary protection visas (TPVs and SHEVs) and bridging visas, including access to financial support to attend university. This meant that people seeking asylum would be in a worse position if they had been awarded a scholarship, i.e. the financial relief they received for their education would have a negative impact on financial support they were receiving from the government, in some cases a cessation of payments.
- **Qualification recognition is a costly process.** Costs can include but are not limited to English language education and/or tests, translation of documents, obtaining copies of documents from overseas, bridging courses, fees of recognising bodies, required work experience programs. Often the amount awarded helps individuals to get one step closer, however, it is often not enough for the full costs of recognition.
- **Identifying clients who are the right organisational fit for Allianz.** This can be difficult when participants are under pressure to find employment / do not have prior experience working in a corporate organisation where we discover that the role and organisation may not be the right fit for them after they have been successful. A more in-depth discussion is required around understanding clients’ short-term and long-term goals would be helpful, as well as any previous work experience they may have had in their country of origin where those skills can be transferred to these roles with Allianz.



Key Learnings

This experience has generated three key learnings for SSI and Allianz:

1. Continual check-ins and evaluation are needed to enable improvement of activities within the overall partnership.
2. Listening and understanding what each party's objectives are is critical to sustaining a successful partnership.
3. When an individual benefits from a scholarship, the whole family can benefit. For example, scholarship recipients have highlighted how the financial support extends to their families by reducing household financial stress and families being encouraged by the positive attitudes of recipients.
4. Success of the client's journey from program to cadetship is dependent on the support of both organisations involved. SSI with their program management team, training, work experience and assessments to identify and ready capable participants, and Allianz for ensuring the training, buddy system, and ongoing check-ins to offer maximum post-placement support. This ensures performance, retention and overall work satisfaction.

What Makes the Program Different?

- Partnerships between NGOs and corporates are not new, however, this partnership does more than ticking a social impact box. The partnership provides targeted support for both employment

More information

More information can be found on the Allianz website [here](#) and the SSI website [here](#).

You can also contact Settlement Services International at the details below:

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