Direct Services

During the last year, Foundation House has continued to receive a high rate of referrals for new clients to access services. In 2006/2007 Foundation House provided services to 4213 clients from over 40 different countries of origin and this year (2007/08) services have been provided to 3973 clients (Table 1).

The countries from which clients are arriving have changed in the last two years with most clients now of Burmese origin. The next largest intakes are from Sudan, Iraq and Afghanistan. Countries of origin reflect zones of conflict in the world and most of our clients even those of a young age have been exposed to extreme levels of hardship, violence, displacement and loss (Table 5).

The types of services offered include individual and family counselling, advocacy and a range of complementary therapies (Table 3). Group work has also been used to address a range of special needs. In the south east of Melbourne, there are a number of families from Afghanistan. Challenges typical of settlement in a new country have been exacerbated for these families by the long periods of separation that women and children have had from husbands and fathers. Group programs have worked with fathers and children with the aim of rebuilding relationships and addressing experiences of loss. An additional group has commenced with men who have been ex-combatants to explore the impact of their pre-arrival experiences on their settlement.

Generally, cases being referred to Foundation House have been particularly complex in nature and challenging in that clients often have a wide range of needs to be met (Table 4). The nature of Foundation House work presents many challenges for staff and in the case of increasing demand, staff teams often find themselves to be under sustained levels of pressure.

Foundation House clients meet the Governor of Victoria, Prof. David de Kretser, AC

Over its twenty year history, Foundation House has continually invested in systems designed to provide both professional development and support to staff, enabling both a low staff turnover and staff to continue to provide high quality levels of service.

Further information about Foundation House services or referring a client to our service is available on our website.

Direct Services data

TABLE 1

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN OF VFST CLIENTS IN 2007/08

	IHSS	Generalist	Both	Total
Afghanistan	233	155	75	463
Albania		12	1	13
Bosnia and Herzegovina		40		40
Burma (Myanmar)	953	88	232	1273
Burundi	18	67	17	102
Cambodia		14		14
Congo, Democratic Republic of	50	16	18	84
Eritrea	8	25	12	45
Ethiopia	38	84	9	131
Iran	27	43	6	76
Iraq	199	151	87	437
Kosova		18	5	23
Liberia	45	44	36	125
Serbia	8	4		12
Sierra Leone	15	10	4	29
Somalia	3	41	10	54
Sri Lanka	8	51	1	60
Sudan	306	269	178	753
Turkey		25		25
Former Yugoslavia	17	4	1	22
Other**	6	21	2	29
Other***	25	121	17	163
TOTAL	**1959**	**1303**	**711**	**3973**

NOTES

For children born in Australia (n=38), the country of birth of their parent(s) is listed.

IHSS: Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy

Generalist: Clients that arrived in Australia more than 12 months ago and IHSS clients who received long-term counselling

Both: Have received a service under IHSS and Generalist

** Countries not listed in ABS at time of entry

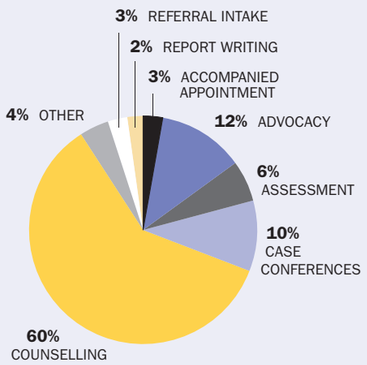
*** 38 countries with number less than 10

TABLE 3

TYPE OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO VFST CLIENTS 2007/08

(Hours % Direct Service Time)

GENERALIST



IHSS

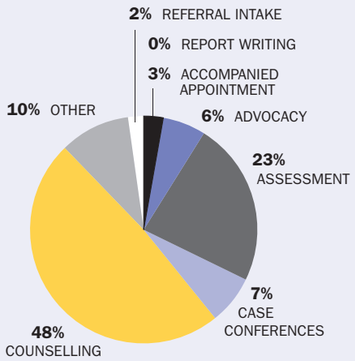


TABLE 2

VFST CLIENTS BY AGE, GENDER AND PROGRAM 2007/08

	IHSS		GENERALIST		BOTH		NATURAL THERAPIES		MENTAL HEALTH CLINIC	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
0-10 years	284	267	67	101	86	85	6	8	3	2
11-20 years	230	297	144	157	113	101	8	5	5	5
21-30 years	188	198	101	113	62	41	39	7	9	21
31-40 years	135	125	127	131	74	42	48	14	31	39
41-50 years	81	65	115	103	34	25	46	19	46	36
51-60 years	26	30	59	61	19	14	29	12	20	23
61+ years	16	17	13	11	9	6	6	3	1	6
TOTAL	**960**	**999**	**626**	**677**	**397**	**314**	**182**	**68**	**115**	**132**

Note: Number of clients under Natural Therapies and Mental Health Clinic are included in the IHSS and Generalist program figures

TABLE 4

NEEDS AND PROBLEMS OF VFST CLIENTS 2007-2008 % frequency at assessment

MEDICAL		0-17 years	18+ years
Dental	IHSS	16	14
	GENERALIST	8	11
	BOTH	12	12
General Practitioner	IHSS	62	72
	GENERALIST	51	58
	BOTH	53	63
Optometry	IHSS	4	8
	GENERALIST	2	7
	BOTH	0	6
Specialist	IHSS	1	5
	GENERALIST	3	6
	BOTH	2	5
Specialist: Psychiatry	IHSS	1	1
	GENERALIST	1	13
	BOTH	0	3

SOCIAL LIVING DIFFICULTIES		0-17 years	18+ years
Family Violence	IHSS	2	3
	GENERALIST	12	15
	BOTH	7	4
Marital or Family Discord	IHSS	6	7
	GENERALIST	17	33
	BOTH	15	15
Family Breakdown	IHSS	7	9
	GENERALIST	25	32
	BOTH	10	12
Employment	IHSS		25
	GENERALIST		42
	BOTH		34
Financial: Income Support	IHSS		33
	GENERALIST		46
	BOTH		39

		0-17 years	18+ years
Financial: Other	IHSS		24
	GENERALIST		43
	BOTH		32
Higher Qualifications Not Recognised	IHSS		3
	GENERALIST		16
	BOTH		5
Housing	IHSS		34
	GENERALIST		49
	BOTH		40
Immigration (Sponsorship)	IHSS		48
	GENERALIST		43
	BOTH		56
Major Illness or Handicap in the Family	IHSS	8	15
	GENERALIST	18	30
	BOTH	12	17

		0-17 years	18+ years
Mental Illness	IHSS	3	4
	GENERALIST	9	16
	BOTH	7	4
School Attendance	IHSS	15	18
	GENERALIST	13	11
	BOTH	21	27
Significant Concern for Family Overseas	IHSS	37	67
	GENERALIST	42	63
	BOTH	49	73
Since Arrival, Death of a Close Relative or Friend	IHSS	4	7
	GENERALIST	7	26
	BOTH	2	7
Social Isolation	IHSS	25	41
	GENERALIST	42	55
	BOTH	40	55

TABLE 5

VFST CLIENTS' EXPERIENCE OF TORTURE AND TRAUMA 2007/08 (% frequency)

PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE		0-17 years	18+ years
Dangerous flight	IHSS	36	65
	GENERALIST	55	69
	BOTH	42	74
Detention of family or friends	IHSS	8	11
	GENERALIST	18	39
	BOTH	10	15
Disapearance of family members	IHSS	11	20
	GENERALIST	27	43
	BOTH	19	31
Forced separation from family	IHSS	24	52
	GENERALIST	48	70
	BOTH	30	66
House raided	IHSS	9	21
	GENERALIST	13	36
	BOTH	9	30
Solitary confinement	IHSS	0	2
	GENERALIST	1	9
	BOTH	0	3
Subject to mock executions	IHSS	2	7
	GENERALIST	2	7
	BOTH	1	6
Threat of harm to family	IHSS	37	63
	GENERALIST	67	80
	BOTH	47	79
Witnessing violence	IHSS	30	57
	GENERALIST	57	75
	BOTH	40	76
Witnessing others killed	IHSS	8	23
	GENERALIST	10	36
	BOTH	15	40

DETENTION		0-17 years	18+ years
Detention: Concentration Camp	IHSS	3	2
	GENERALIST	0	2
	BOTH	2	2
Detention: Home Detention	IHSS	0	1
	GENERALIST	0	1
	BOTH	0	0
Legally Sentenced: Prison Term	IHSS	0	2
	GENERALIST	0	3
	BOTH	0	1
Summary (illegal) Detention	IHSS	1	3
	GENERALIST	1	14
	BOTH	0	2

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE			
Severe Beating	IHSS	1	10
	GENERALIST	4	32
	BOTH	1	12
Combatant	IHSS	0	6
	GENERALIST	0	5
	BOTH	1	6
Rape	IHSS	0	0.4
	GENERALIST	2	7
	BOTH	0	2
Sexual Assault other than Rape	IHSS	0	3
	GENERALIST	1	6
	BOTH	0	4

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE		0-17 years	18+ years
Under Combat Fire	IHSS	14	32
	GENERALIST	23	32
	BOTH	24	41
Damage to teeth, genital mutilation or other	IHSS	2	7
	GENERALIST	5	14
	BOTH	3	7

HARDSHIP			
In Hiding	IHSS	8	20
	GENERALIST	11	18
	BOTH	8	21
Internal Displacement	IHSS	9	19
	GENERALIST	23	27
	BOTH	18	25
Lack of Food or Water	IHSS	16	27
	GENERALIST	27	23
	BOTH	23	39
Lack of Shelter	IHSS	14	25
	GENERALIST	26	23
	BOTH	16	36
Refugee Camp	IHSS	41	46
	GENERALIST	42	27
	BOTH	44	49

LOSSES		0-17 years	18+ years
War Related Loss*	IHSS	4	13
	GENERALIST	10	16
	BOTH	8	17
Non War Related Loss*	IHSS	1	2
	GENERALIST	1	3
	BOTH	1	2
Forced Separation from parent or child	IHSS	6	13
	GENERALIST	9	15
	BOTH	12	20

* 10 is equivalent to a death of a parent for a young child or death of a child

Client snapshot: Hilal's story

Hilal is a 19 year old young man from Sierra Leone. He arrived in Australia in 2007. He grew up in Sierra Leone and recalls many happy days as a child, helping his dad to work on cars, going off to school each morning and working in the school garden. Hilal remembers his dad being very busy in his work as a builder and a mechanic, but always making sure he was there for his family too.

When Hilal was 10 years old, word came that the rebels were on their way to his town. Hilal and his family fled with only the clothes they were wearing alongside others from their town. In the months that followed, Hilal and his family lived from the kindness of strangers, staying in houses and abandoned buses, and scavenging for food. At times the buildings they stayed in were shot at, burnt down and their lives were in constant danger. They reached the border after a few months in Guinea and arrived at the refugee camp, Conakry. Soon after arriving in the refugee camp, Hilal's father left to go in search of his parents-in-law. Not long after this, word came that Hilal's father had been killed. One of Hilal's older brothers went in search of their father and he is still missing. After 7 years in the refugee camp Hilal (then 16), his mother and younger siblings were sponsored to come to Australia.

Hilal says 'When I came to Australia, I started English language school but I always wanted to become a mechanic like my dad. In Australia, it's a great country to live in and there is a lot of opportunities'.

Gaining access to these opportunities was initially difficult for Hilal, as he spent his days going to school and caring for his mother and five younger siblings. With the support of his counsellor/ advocate at Foundation House, Hilal enrolled in HandbrakeTurn, an eight week automotive training course which aims to support disadvantaged young people to "get their lives on track".

Hilal says 'Going to HandbrakeTurn has given me a lot of experience and skills and the people here are really helpful and friendly. I am happy that I have got some new skills but I am sad that I lost my dad. I know he is proud of me.'

Hilal has recently completed the eight week course including a two week work trial at a major car company. He was offered a mechanics apprenticeship with them and has started immediately. At his graduation at HandbrakeTurn, he received the overall 'best workmanship award' and a set of tools to start him off.

Hilal is a courageous example to his younger siblings and all around him of what is possible. He works hard, wants to learn and honours the memory of his father in his life. 'I want to open up my own business one day, to have my own mechanics workshop'. Given his motivation and enthusiasm, Hilal has wonderful opportunities ahead of him.