

# ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23



**New Settlers  
Family and  
Community  
Trust**

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## **New Settlers Family and Community Trust (NFACT)**

Yarnton House, 14 Erson Avenue, Royal Oak, Auckland

**Web** [nfact.co.nz](http://nfact.co.nz) | **Facebook** [facebook.com/nfactnz](https://facebook.com/nfactnz)

Charities Services Registration: CC57453

**Auditors:** JSA Audit Limited | **Legal support:** Russell McVeagh



# Message from our Board

We are honoured to present the Chair's Report for 2022/2023. This marks the culmination of another period filled with remarkable achievements and challenges, highlighting the unwavering spirit of our dedicated team of staff and volunteers ably led by the CEO.

New Settlers Family and Community Trust (NFACT) has remained steadfast in its commitment to supporting refugees, evacuees, and other groups facing challenges as they adapt to new surroundings soon after arriving in New Zealand. It is with much pride that we share the progress we have made, thanks to the support and funding from the Government and philanthropic organisations.

## **Government and Philanthropic support**

We are deeply grateful for the continued support of government agencies and philanthropic organisations that have recognised the vital importance of our work and encouraged us. Their funding has been instrumental in allowing us to expand our reach and make a significant impact on the lives of those we serve.

## **Assisting Refugees and Evacuees**

Over the past year, NFACT played a pivotal role in assisting refugees and evacuees in their journey to settle in New Zealand. Our team worked tirelessly and with absolute commitment to provide them with essential resources, support and guidance, as well as to help them develop a sense of belonging.

Thanks to the generous funding received, we were able to:

- Facilitate the safe relocation of hundreds of individuals and families, ensuring they had access to housing, food, and health care upon arrival.
- Offer language and cultural orientation programmes to help newcomers navigate the new social environment and integrate with New Zealand society.
- Provide job training, placement services and explain the New Zealand Road Code to empower refugees and evacuees to build and maintain stable, independent lives.

## **Mental Health support**

The emotional well-being of the people we serve has always been a top priority. In the face of multiple operational challenges, NFACT swiftly adapted and expanded its services to provide critical mental health support to vulnerable individuals.

Our team of compassionate counselors and mental health professionals extended services to reach those in need; especially individuals and families who suffered distress from trauma in their country of origin and the uncertainty of migration.

### **Pandemic Relief efforts**

The COVID-19 pandemic spread over the past few years presented a unique set of challenges for our organisation and the communities we serve. Our team's adaptability and unwavering dedication shone brightly as they navigated an uncharted landscape. We distributed relief packages to pandemic victims, ensuring they had access to food, hygiene supplies, and essential health care.

### **Acknowledging our exceptional team**

None of these achievements would have been possible without the remarkable dedication and adaptability of our trustees, staff and volunteers. In the face of rapidly changing situations and unprecedented challenges, our staff team rose to the occasion with commitment to our mission and resilience. We extend my heartfelt gratitude to each and every member of the NFACT family for their hard work and unwavering dedication.

We welcomed a new trustee, Eleanor Holroyd, onto our governance team. She brings to NFACT her extensive experience in social justice, human rights and health equity.

### **Looking to the future**

As we reflect on accomplishments from past years, we also recognise that our work is far from finished.

The needs of refugees, evacuees, and other groups needing support persist, and we are committed to meeting these challenges head-on. We will continue to work closely with our government partners and generous philanthropic supporters to expand our reach and make a positive impact on the lives of those we serve.

We are inspired by the collective strength and resilience of the members of our organisation and the communities we serve. I have full confidence that the unwavering and continuous guidance provided by the Board of Trustees will stand the organisation in good stead. Thus, along with the continued support of all stakeholders, NFACT will hold its place as a beacon of hope and source of help for those in need.

Thank you all for your steadfast commitment to our mission and purpose as well as for being with us on this wonderful journey.



**Suresh Rajan and Eleanor Holroyd  
Co-Chairs of the Board of Trustees**

# Message from our Chief Executive

It is with great pleasure I present the CEO Report for NFACT for the financial year 2022/2023. This year has been a testament to the dedication, resilience, and compassion of our board of trustees, staff and volunteers in serving refugees and people from refugee backgrounds in the wider Auckland region.

Together, we have made significant progress in our mission to provide support and opportunities to those who need it most. Our own personal experience guided our work and helped us to better understand the need, and deliver the services that we would have liked to receive when we first came to New Zealand.

At NFACT, we aim to support new settlers to New Zealand, especially those from refugee-backgrounds by providing culturally appropriate services to enable them to manage their own wellbeing and overcome the social and mental barriers to settlement. In the past year, we have committed ourselves to this mission, making a profound impact on the lives of countless individuals and families.

The 2022/23 year was a period of growth for NFACT. We saw growth in our staff and volunteer numbers as well as the reach of our programmes and the services that were offered to our community of Afghan Evacuees. NFACT is the only organisation supporting this group of people who were brought from Afghanistan under emergency, and we rapidly grew to accommodate their settlement and wellbeing needs.

We saw the strengthening of our organisational foundations to enable us to do our work well. This included the development of policies and procedures, a new database for managing client data, and ongoing strategic planning leading to a clear strategy, and operational plan.

I am most proud of our staff team. The team comprises social workers, a counsellor, a psychologist, finance manager, operational manager, and community liaison officers, a number of whom are from refugee backgrounds. In addition, we have recruited several people from the refugee community to facilitate and lead events and groups.

The need for agile and culturally appropriate settlement and wellbeing support services is extremely important in successful resettlement. I am proud to report that we are a values-driven organisation and always strive to follow good practice principles in all aspects of our operations. We cannot do this work on our own - we have many community, government and iwi partners who support us to achieve positive outcomes for our communities.

A big focus for us is our financial sustainability. We have a small financial reserve in place to cover funding shortfalls or any short-term emergency situation. We continue to access funding from a broad range of funders to support our financial sustainability. Without our funders, the wraparound and strengths-based model of care that makes our work unique would not be possible.

We will continue strengthening the quality of the service that we provide to the community as the clients are always the center of the work we do in the community.

### **Looking to the future**

As a learning organisation, we are continually looking at ways we can improve our service delivery and strengthen our practice.

We will look to conduct an external evaluation of NFACT's approach and programmes with AUT University's Migrant and Refugee Health Research Centre to understand the impact of our work and to continue to strengthen our services.

As an organisation reliant on our funding partners, we will be searching for more sustainable funding to enable us to plan and deliver services on an ongoing basis.

Our partnership with tangata whenua is one we wish to strengthen. We have much to learn from and share with our iwi partners. We are looking at ways to increase connection between cultures, and improve refugee knowledge about Aotearoa's history, and Māori worldview and practices.

We are excited as we look into the future. While the need is evident, we have a strong and capable team who will support our refugee background communities.



Fahima Saeid  
**Chief Executive Officer**

# Who we are

NFACT is a charitable trust which was established in 2019 to support people from refugee backgrounds.

## Our Vision

To help new settlers and their families thrive within their communities in New Zealand.

## Our Mission

To support new settlers to New Zealand, especially those from refugee and refugee-like backgrounds by providing culturally appropriate services so that they are able to manage and overcome the social and mental barriers to resettlement, with an emphasis on providing services for former refugees by former refugees.

## Our Values

### Integrity

Commit to working in a truthful and honest way

### Respect

Value the opinion of others and treat people with compassion

### Empowerment

Focus on people's strengths to enable them to thrive

### Connectedness

Create a culture of inclusion and belonging

### Innovation

Act with courage, challenging the status quo, and seek new ways to address issues



### NFACT team

Amin Bakhsh, Annah Stevens, Karen Newborn, Jolanta Fontaine, Behishta Najibi, Polait Kiyork, Shalini Pillai, Fahima Saeid, Azrah Ghulami, Esperance Bankundiye, Astrid Watson, Asif Agah



Clockwise, starting from the top: Waitangi Women's Leadership Camp, Homeland Cooking Exchange with Peter Gordon, International Women's Day Celebrations, Graduates from the Digital Literacy Course, Christmas Celebrations, Youth Leadership Camp



Clockwise, starting from the top: Nowruz (Persian New Year) Celebrations, Afghanistan Independence Day, Youth Leadership Camp, Women's Leadership Camp, Migrant Resilience Workshop, Christmas Celebrations



# Settlement service

Our settlement service provided support to 1478 Afghan Evacuees in Auckland. This involved helping people navigate systems and get access to local resources. Key activities included enrolling individuals and families with local health providers, managing medical appointments, enrolling children and youth in schools, connecting people with resources, and dealing with work and income-related matters.

We successfully connected families and individuals with service providers. We enrolled adults in English for Speakers of Other Languages programmes, enrolled children in playgroups to allow mothers to be alongside their children while learning English. We also helped people to integrate into the existing community by linking them with local mosques and offering additional activities or training to meet their needs.

**Emergency Support:** Several families' homes were affected by the Auckland floods of 2023 and the ongoing COVID lockdown of 2022. We were on hand to support those affected by providing guidance and information and ensuring compliance with emergency authority instructions. In addition, financial and food support was provided to meet the families' needs.



**Orientation Programme:** Once most of the Afghan families were resettled in the community, NFACT initiated an orientation programme to share more in-depth information and provide a space for them to engage with various agencies. We began the rollout of sessions across Auckland to ensure wide access by the community.



**393** families were invited to 8 orientation sessions

The following sessions had been delivered by the end of the year:

- Information sessions about the education system – Ministry of Education
- Information about work and income and the welfare system – Ministry of Social Development
- Information about the health system in NZ – Ministry of Health Te Whatu Ora Health NZ
- Understanding rights and obligations as a tenant – Tenants Protection Association
- Safety in Aotearoa New Zealand – NZ Police

The sessions we provided for our families have played a crucial role in helping them understand their rights and obligations, empowering them to navigate their settlement journey effectively.

“Attending the housing information session opened my eyes to stand up for my rights.

**A mother who faced challenges with her landlord as she was not aware of her rights as a tenant**

**Driver License Training:** Our driver license training programme has proved popular as it is a means to independence, to improve access to services and gaining employment. We provide interpreting and support and have been so proud that almost all the people who enrolled were able to pass.

**32** people enrolled, 12 sessions offered, over 95% pass rate



**Digital Literacy:** We partnered with Affirming Works and 2020 Trust to offer a digital literacy programme for our clients. This programme was valuable in helping people gain digital and technology skills to help them in their day to day lives. Many felt more confident using a computer after this programme.

**24** people completed digital literacy course



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*The settlement journey is often a difficult one for refugee background communities. Our ultimate aim is to see communities thrive in Aotearoa New Zealand and I'm so pleased that we are able to provide settlement support that is multi-faceted, and is adaptable to the changing needs of community and is done in collaboration with others.*



**Polait Kiyork**  
Programme Lead  
Settlement

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**Settlement team**

Asif Agah, Esperance Bankundiye, Polait Kiyork, Azrah Ghulami, Behishta Najibi, Annah Stevens, Amin Bakhsh

# Youth development programme

As part of our settlement service, our youth development programme was created to meet a growing need to engage with and support young people within the community as some may struggle to adapt to their new lives.

To foster connections with the wider youth community and provide useful and engaging activities, we created a programme with young leaders from the Afghan community. We trained seven youth leaders to develop their leadership skills to better support their community.



**Youth Development team**

Behishta & Nahida (back) Ali & Amin (front)

This youth development programme is aimed at boosting their confidence and mentoring young people to set and achieve goals, as well as supporting them to become more connected in New Zealand society and become leaders and advocates for their community. The programme began with a weekly peer support meeting for a group of young women and was later expanded to include young men with weekly sports activities, a youth leadership camp and school holiday programmes.



# Behishta's story

I'm Behishta and I'm one of the Afghan evacuees that came to New Zealand in 2021. Today I want to tell you about my journey from Afghanistan to New Zealand.

When I was 15 years old, I started working whilst I was studying at high school. Over the years I worked with national and international NGOs like USAID, US embassy Afghanistan ministries, and the Swedish council. I also graduated from Law school (Politics). In the meantime, I was a founder of a small organisation funded by US government that provided important hygiene products for women in 34 provinces. I built a life that I was proud of.

In a country like Afghanistan, the work environment is different from in New Zealand. There are a lot of challenges, and problems I faced as a woman. In the end, through perseverance, I achieved what I set out to. Then sadly, when the former government fell down, my dreams, my goals, my life, my education were all destroyed in a minute.

Because of the work and activities I used to do, my life was put in danger. I was hidden for two months. When I left Kabul for Herat province, my face was fully covered so I couldn't be recognised by anyone.

When I arrived in Auckland, I was shocked. Shocked because I was thinking I lost everything, and it was hard to start again. I heard that working in New Zealand was not easy as there are lots of processes and criteria.

In the first 6 months I felt many people were happy because it was new country and everyone wanted to go and see new things, a new culture, and new people. But for me, these months were the worst of my life. I went through depression. I changed from a strong woman who fought against a hundred people just to achieve her goals to a woman that didn't want to go anywhere or see anything, I was always crying, I was so upset.

So, after 4 months when we moved from the hotel to our house after few days, I have a vivid memory of looking at my face in the mirror and not recognising myself. I told myself "It's not you. This isn't Behishta, you're not weak." I didn't want to just stay at home and not work. I have been financially independent since I was 15 years old.

So, I decided to end this suffering and start from somewhere. So, I applied to work as a Language and Cultural assistant at ELP (English Language Partners), I also worked in the same role with Literacy Waitakere. Now I can proudly say I'm working with NFACT as a Family & Youth Support Worker.

In the end I want to add that I feel lucky that I came here. My family are lucky because we have rights, and women are independent here. We have security, we have peace, and we have rights to education. And I hope that one day my country could have the same things for the Afghan women.



**Behishta Najibi**  
Family & Youth  
Support Worker

# Wellbeing service

Our wellbeing service aims to enhance the mental health and emotional wellbeing of our clients and their whanau. We provide counselling, psychoeducational sessions, and advocacy for refugee background people with a focus on mental health promotion, prevention, and early intervention.

Advocacy for clients has grown over the year; our team works with a number of schools and government agencies to support clients.

The team provides one-to-one and group counselling, as well as running regular sessions on our Migrant Family Resilience and violence prevention programmes to support newly arrived families in the community.



**224** counselling sessions provided

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*The 1:1 support and psychosocial groups upon first arrival offer a place of support and empowerment. There is plenty more to achieve - this includes ongoing 1:1 sessions that are often needed to more thoroughly and comprehensively address and respond to root causes of trauma, depression and anxiety commonly experienced post forced-migration.*

Wellbeing team

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Our wellbeing service includes facilitated psychosocial support groups. These peer support groups are led by people from the community, with support from NFACT.

Each group aims to provide a safe space for people to share information with each other, learn new skills, support each other and build confidence to participate in their wider communities.



We ran four weekly groups in 2022/23:  
Men's Group in Mt Roskill  
Women's Group in Royal Oak  
Women's Group in Glen Eden  
Women's Group in Pakuranga

 **123** psychosocial group sessions



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**Wellbeing team**  
Astrid, Khalida, Najiba, Jolanta

*Over the last year, we have seen many positive changes: from people first learning about mental health and talk therapy as a means to support their own recovery from trauma, grief and loss, adjustment difficulties, to growing their sense of independence and confidence in a new country.*

Wellbeing team

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# Creative Hub

We were very excited to launch our Creative Hub in 2022 – this is a teaching and learning hub for sewing and creative work, and microenterprise development. Over the year, we taught weekly sewing classes and ran sewing and quilting workshops. These workshops culminated in selling handmade products for donation at several market around the city.

We also held weekly arts and crafts, and sewing groups facilitated by community leaders at the Māngere East Community Centre where women could learn skill development and connect with others.

Along with the classes, we assisted women with language and writing, for the paperwork and internet communication needed for their sewing contract work. English language, relating to sewing vocabulary, was also taught alongside, which helped increase women's confidence in speaking.

The Creative Hub includes microenterprise and business development for those who are interested in setting up their own small businesses or to strengthen their employability. The team supported women to gain the confidence and skills by helping them deliver mending services at pop-up shops in shopping centres in Auckland and to sell their products at local community markets.

 **85** creative skills participants



Participants appreciated that they were learning skills and working towards financial independence, while also preserving their culture and heritage. They felt a sense of pride and accomplishment as a result.



**3+3** markets & pop-up repair shops

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*The women who attended our classes often arrived very shy and nervous. However, after attending our classes and workshops a few times, they became more confident, social, and happy. They engaged with the other women on the courses, often unknown to them beforehand and made new friends and associates.*



**Karen Newborn**  
Creative Hub  
Manager

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Clockwise, starting from the top left : Community Orientation Workshop, Women's Leadership Camp in collaboration with E Tū Whānau, Youth Leadership Camp, Women's Digital Literacy Course, Psychosocial Group session, children activities at Christmas



Clockwise, starting from the top left : Christmas celebrations, Homeland Cooking Exchange with Peter Gordon, Youth Leadership Camp, NFACT team workshop, market stall at Festival of Roses, recent arrival of Afghan Youth



# Volunteer programme

We rely on our volunteers - their invaluable support and contributions are crucial to the success of our programmes, workshops and group projects and the settlement of the community.

Our volunteers adhere to a code of ethics and receive training to help them understand their role, to get a deeper understanding of the journey of a refugee and cultural training. We are deeply appreciative of their hard work.



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*We are a small band of volunteers working under the umbrella of NFACT to support refugees settle into their new life in the Auckland community. Our work would not have been possible without the support from the Somervell Presbyterian Church Opportunity Shop in Remuera for their generous donation of furniture, clothes, crockery, and much more. All have been very thankfully received by the ten families with greatest needs, under our care.*

*Over the year we supported these families with weekly shopping, household donations, legal assistance, and connecting them with government agencies.*

*A big thank you also to a few generous donors and the Op Shop, for monetary donations which have been used to purchase food parcels, household goods not available in the Op Shop, including HOP travel cards.*

*We also thank the Presbyterian Support Foodbank who have supplied some of our refugee families with food parcels when they have been in desperate need.*

*The main challenge for most of us volunteers would have to be the language differences and maybe it would benefit us all to learn a few Afghani phrases!*

*I have now been working with refugees for more than 22 years, my first contact being the boys off the Tampa boat in 2001. All have been interesting and rewarding contacts.*



**Vivienne Wilson**  
Volunteer

”

# Events

NFACT understands the importance of community events in celebrating cultural heritage, enhancing a sense of belonging, helping people feel more connected to their community, and learning about other cultures.

These were also opportunities to celebrate with our funders and collaborators. We see these events as important elements in a successful resettlement journey for our refugee communities.

## **Waka wāhine: From Afghanistan to Waitangi**

There was laughter and singing as a group of 37 mothers and daughters experienced the Waitangi environment at a 5 day leadership camp. There was a waka ama experience that was part of a culture trip that included rongoā, poi making, mau rākau, weaving, Māori games and pipi gathering. There was shared eating, sharing stories and lots of laughter amidst the learning. They also began their journey of understanding Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

**Christmas:** We celebrated the end of the year by inviting families to a Christmas event where around 170 people had the opportunity to explore and experience different cultures, including Niuean, Colombian, and Burmese and New Zealand communities. The children enjoyed the fun activities and there was lovely food to enjoy.

## **Events we ran in 2022/23:**

Matariki  
Christmas  
Eid  
Nowruz (in collaboration with others)  
Iftar  
Afghan Independence Day  
International Women's Day  
Youth Leadership Camp  
Women's Leadership Camp  
Waitangi Cultural Exchange  
Homeland Food and Culture Exchange  
Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Whai Māia  
refugee welcome



### **Afghanistan Independence Day**

Over 200 people were part of 2022's Afghanistan Independence Day celebration at the Mt Roskill War Memorial Hall. We saw amazing cultural performances, poetry, songs, dance, and stories from the Afghan community. We were grateful to Hon Phil Twyford, NZ Police and E Tū Whānau for supporting us on this day.



### **Youth Leadership Camp**

A key highlight for the youth this year was the leadership camp at Shakespear Lodge in North Auckland, run by YMCA. We had 25 young people attend the camp where they did rock climbing, archery, hiking, swimming (some for their very first time, with the help of life jackets), and ran a cultural evening. The young people created and performed skits that included traditional Afghan music, dancing, and already resettled youth shared their experiences of living in New Zealand.



### **Nowruz**

For the first time in New Zealand, four communities – Afghan, Iranian, Kurdish and Zoroastrian – came together to celebrate Nowruz, the Persian New Year. With the support of NZ Police and Auckland Council, this event took place at the Mt Roskill War Memorial Hall with over 200 people attending. There were poems, speeches, music, dances and great food enjoyed by many including the recently arrived Afghan evacuees.



### **Culture and Food Exchange at Homeland**

We were privileged to be welcomed by Chef Peter Gordon at Homeland. Peter shared his Pavlova recipe and we taught their team to make Ashak (vegetarian dumplings) served with a chickpea lentil and mince-based tomato sauce and yoghurt, as well as Borani Banjan - an Afghan eggplant dish. Homeland's Cooking School was filled with the smell of delicious food and lots of laughter. We shared stories and we learned a lot from the Homeland team.



# Highlights



**Sharing learning** with The University of Auckland, Massey University and AUT University – cultural training for counselling students and participating in research projects.



Development of a **unique and specialist model** to support refugee resettlement based on Te Whare Tapa Wha and the Te Pae Māhutonga frameworks.



**Partnerships with organisations and funders** such as E Tū Whānau, Migrant Action Trust, Asylum Seekers Support Trust, Refugee Council of New Zealand, Refugees as Survivors, various ethnic communities, and our funding partners.



NFACT's **strengthening identity and leadership** – stronger strategic direction, policies, procedures, financial management systems, human resources, database, professional and qualified staff team.



Growing **leadership in refugee youth and women** – increasing number of people facilitating peer support groups, running events, and supporting their community.



Our **Te Tiriti o Waitangi journey of learning** – staff participating in Treaty workshops, developing strong relationships with Ngāti Whātua Orakei, Te Tii Marae Waitangi and Te Tahawai Marae in Pakuranga.



# A big thank you

Thank you to our funders and supporters who helped us deliver support to our families in Auckland.



**Mt Roskill**



