AMEP and Settlement outcomes

AMEP Conference (MAY 2013)

Introduction

Following the historic perspective presented by DIAC, AMES paper outlines current government policies informing the provision of settlement services; and the specific role of the AMEP in contributing to these policy outcomes.

The paper outlines the features of the AMEP that distinguish it as a unique and valuable settlement program.

Finally, we consider the gaps in measuring and reporting particular program outcomes and suggest ways in which these gaps may potentially be addressed as part of a broader evaluation. Conceptual frameworks and indicators of settlement from a range of sources have been referenced in this exercise.

1. What policy outcomes does the government want?

The need for a strong migration program is economically driven.   Migration is essential to the sustained growth of Australia's workforce and its requisite skills, and a key ingredient in meeting the challenges of an ageing population. The Humanitarian program fulfils Australia's international obligations and responsibilities to refugees seeking resettlement. These are bi-partisan drivers for the Migration and Humanitarian programs.

The government's settlement policy is about achieving a successful multicultural society. This means social and economic participation of migrants and refugees, sustainable settlement and citizenship. These are also bi-partisan objectives.

The current government's settlement policy is outlined in "The Settlement Journey: Strengthening Australia through migration"[1]. This policy states that the "Australian Government's settlement policy …involves addressing the needs of new arrivals to help them develop the knowledge and skills they need to become active and independent participants in Australian society."

In 2009 the Government announced the Strategic Settlement Framework which set out new directions for the reform and strengthening of Australia's settlement services. These were implemented in 2011 and included a major re-design of humanitarian settlement services and the AMEP to *"better align these critical programs with the needs of migrants and humanitarian entrants."* i.e. to achieve better outcomes for clients.

"The government's social inclusion agenda [was] also a key driver for change, influencing both the design and delivery of settlement programs" including the new AMEP business model which commenced in mid-2011.

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[1] Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2012. The Settlement Journey: Strengthening Australia through migration. *http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/government-programs/settlement-policy/settlement-journey.pdf*

In terms of both investment ($212.5m in 2011–2012) and participant numbers (54,154 clients in 2011-2012) the Adult Migrant English Program is the Australian Government's largest settlement program.

The overarching intended settlement policy outcome is equitable participation in multicultural Australia. DIAC's settlement services, including the AMEP, are explicitly linked to this policy and are "*designed to support migrants and humanitarian entrants to settle and participate as fully as possible in Australian society*"[2].

2. How does the AMEP contribute to these policy outcomes?

The AMEP's contribution to achieving the government's policy outcomes is clearly described in DIAC's most recent annual report.

"The program supports the government's social inclusion agenda by fostering social inclusion and participation, and reflects the government's commitment to long-term sustainable settlement outcomes through integrated, targeted and well-designed programs that support clients in their transition to life in Australia. … Learning English is one of the most important steps migrants and humanitarian entrants can take towards successfully settling in Australia." [3]

The AMEP also fulfils an important orientation function, providing clients with practical information about life in Australia. English taught in the AMEP assists with access to mainstream services and systems.

"*In AMEP classes clients learn about Australian society, customs and culture, and are taught English language skills needed for day–to–day situations… This enables migrants and humanitarian entrants make informed choices and helps them to successfully settle in the Australian community. The development of English language skills enables migrants to feel a sense of belonging within the Australian community and equips them with the necessary skills to establish social networks and participate in cultural, economic and political life.*'[4]

There has been much discussion about employment and its place in the program. AMES view, and that of other settlement service providers in Australia and overseas[5], is that employment is both a means to, and measure of, successful settlement, i.e. an integral part of settlement. It is not separate to settlement. This is also the perspective of the vast majority of the client group.

In AMES Longitudinal Study[6] of AMEP clients conducted between 2008 and 2010 ninety-five per cent of the participants indicated that finding work was a high priority for their future. The findings highlighted the importance for new arrivals of employment, and preparation for employment, as part of their settlement process.

DIAC has clearly acknowledged this in the new AMEP business model.

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[2] Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2011–2012 Annual Report

[3] Ibid p 246

[4] Ibid p 247

[5] Refer to discussion of conceptual frameworks p 6

[6] *AMES (2011) Words to Work, Settling in and Finding Work: The experiences of people in the Adult English Program in Melbourne. Report on a 3 year longitudinal study prepared by AMES Research and Policy Unit, Melbourne* http://www.ames.net.au/documents/research-projects/words-to-work-settling-in-and-finding-work-longitudinal-study-of-students-in-the-amep

"The AMEP plays a crucial role in equipping newly arrived migrants and humanitarian entrants with the language skills they need to successfully settle in Australia and secure meaningful, on-going employment… To assist in the transition to work, an additional 200 hours of vocation-specific tuition, including up to 80 hours of work experience placements, are available to eligible AMEP clients through the settlement language pathways to employment and training (SLPET) program.7

To summarise, the AMEP contributes to the achievement of the government's settlement policy objectives by delivering foundational outcomes in

- English language skills,
- Settlement information and cultural orientation,
- Establishment of social connections and
- Transitions to further training and employment.

3. Is the AMEP distinctive to other English language programs?

DIAC's key deliverable for the AMEP is "Settlement-focused English language training is made available to all eligible migrants and humanitarian entrants through contracted service providers."8

The AMEP provides new arrivals the opportunity to learn English which is explicitly linked to their settlement experience, and is necessary for the many different contexts and purposes occurring during an individual's settlement. Accordingly, the AMEP is able to deliver the foundational outcomes in various aspects of settlement described above. (English language skills, settlement information and cultural orientation, establishment of social connections and transitions to further training and employment.)

These outcomes and the features described below distinguish the AMEP from other English programs and make it more than "just an English language program". Distinctive features are
- a business model which provides an integrated package of settlement support,
- contextualised language learning methodology, the high degree of flexibility and
- the transition provided to mainstream

Integrated package of settlement support
The current AMEP model provides six major components which make up an integrated package of settlement support. This model recognises that clients have multiple needs and specific requirements early in settlement to be addressed simultaneously.

It also acknowledges the transitional steps from early settlement (on arrival) to greater participation in mainstream. (E.g. low levels of English to basic social proficiency, little or no knowledge of mainstream services and systems to some information about services and how to access these, a realistic pathway to further training or employment etc. These steps and support would not be the focus of mainstream vocational or language training).

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7 Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2011–2012 Annual Report p248
8 As published in the Portfolio Budget Statements 2011–12 and Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements 2011–12.

The current AMEP model includes:

AMEP component	Specific aspect of settlement addressed
AMEP Settlement Course	Provision of information about mainstream services and systems. Available in first language and English
Special Preparatory Program (SPP)	Contextualised, integrated language learning Additional orientation to learning for high needs clients: Humanitarian clients with very low levels of formal education and experiences of torture and trauma
AMEP 510 hours	Contextualised, integrated language learning English in the context of settlement information and cultural learning i.e. English for settlement purposes. Linked to topics addressed in the Settlement course Transition from the settlement AMEP program to SLPET and then to mainstream training programs and / or employment Provides opportunities for social connection
AMEP Counselling Service	Provides information about further training and employment pathways. Assists with clarification of realistic goals and pathway plans and linkages post AMEP. Assisting transition from the settlement AMEP program to mainstream training programs and / or employment. Also makes referrals to relevant service providers for issues relating to health, housing, etc which may impact on settlement and learning English.
Settlement Language Pathways to Employment and Training Program (SLPET)	Contextualised, integrated language learning Ensuring transition from the settlement AMEP program to mainstream training programs and / or employment Assisting transition to work / development of vocation specific English language skills / total focus of the program is on preparation for employment. Further study and employment outcomes reported Scaffolded approach as AMEP exit level English is insufficient to enrol in mainstream vocational training
Home Tutor Scheme (HTS)	Contextualised, integrated language learning in an informal setting "Clients demonstrate improved settlement outcomes through the completion of settlement focused learning activities"[9] Direct social connection with member of Australian community. Individual focus.

All the above are potential areas for collection of evidence regarding the impacts of the AMEP on settlement outcomes.

Contextualised, integrated language learning

The table above shows several examples of where contextualised language learning occurs in the program. Each of these (SPP, 510 hours, SLPET and VTP) uses topics relevant to settlement. Information provided in the Settlement course and by the AMEP Counsellors underpins this language learning.

The purpose for learning English is to communicate in and negotiate the various day to day contexts encountered during early settlement, and to prepare for the next steps post AMEP which may be further training and/or work and/or community involvement. For all purposes it is worth noting the significant learning and use of information technology embedded in AMEP delivery

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[9] Current Contract KPI 2.10 85% of AMEP Clients exiting the Home Tutor Scheme demonstrate improved settlement outcomes through the completion of settlement focused learning activities.

and learning resources. This capacity to utilise digital technology is an expectation for some clients, already proficient in use of IT and social media; for others it maybe new and necessary learning for living independently in Australia.

Teachers use thematic approaches, focussing on the speaking, listening, reading and writing skills relevant to the specific topic directly related to settlement. For example, clients learn relevant vocabulary and pronunciation, practise common questions and answers, and become familiar with key reading and written activities related to the topic.

Flexibility

The third key characteristic of the AMEP which distinguishes it from other English programs is the high degree of flexibility involved in delivering the program to suit diverse client profiles and meet diverse client needs. As stated earlier, more than 54,000 new arrivals, representing significant diversity, participate in the AMEP annually.

The program varies in composition from year to year as a result of migration and humanitarian program numbers and source countries. The changing AMEP client demographic is most marked in the refugee background groups who currently make up approximately one third of the AMEP client group. This cohort changes in direct response to changes in Australia's Humanitarian Program which in turn is responding to world events.

For example, data shows that refugees and SHP[10] entrants from Africa made up approximately 71% of the program in 2003-04 compared to 33% in 2008-09. Entrants from Asia and the Pacific, including Burma, changed from 1.8% of the program to 33% over the same period. By 2010-11 the top countries of birth for all off-shore entrants were Iraq (24%), Burma (16.1%) and Afghanistan (11.4%), with smaller numbers from Bhutan and Sri Lanka.

In 2011–12, clients in all visa categories represented 188 countries of birth and 256 languages. The top three countries of birth were the People's Republic of China, Vietnam and Afghanistan and the most common first languages of clients were Mandarin, Arabic and Vietnamese.

Client profiles vary across AMEP regions reflecting settlement patterns of new arrivals, and contributing to changing population profiles in different areas. For example, the western region of Melbourne was for many years the major destination for refugees from Karen and Chin Burmese backgrounds, and prior to that from the Horn of Africa and Vietnam. By contrast, the west is now becoming a destination for business migrants from China, who are moving in increasing numbers into new housing developments in the outer western suburbs around Point Cook, as well as the inner west. The south-eastern suburbs continue to be the largest single destination for refugees arriving in Melbourne, with the majority of refugees from Afghanistan settling around Dandenong and beyond in the outer south-east. This includes a high proportion of the clients coming to AMES on bridging visas. AMES' Flagstaff centre in the CBD, and the centre at Box Hill in Melbourne's east continue to attract large numbers of Chinese migrants, while recent years have also seen a significant shift in the settlement of Chin Burmese clients into the outer east, in Ringwood and beyond.

Other AMEP service providers will recognise similar diversity within and across regions and be familiar with the flexibility involved in managing and delivering the program in this continually changing environment.

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[10] Special Humanitarian Program

The diversity is not only represented by the source countries and visas of AMEP clients. There is also diversity in age, educational background, language and literacy levels, including digital literacy, work skills and histories, family situations, goals, expectations of Australia, expectations of service providers including education providers, settlement location and level of family, community and social support (e.g. established communities or new and emerging communities).

This level of diversity requires the AMEP to be continuously flexible and responsive.

The AMEP works with this level of diversity in the following ways:
- Use of a content free, (language-skills based) curriculum coupled with an appropriate language acquisition methodology allows for broad range of contextualised content to respond to diverse and changing client needs; i.e. teachers can readily customise the program to address changing participants' needs and goals, compared to mainstream programs which may follow prescribed curriculum content and / or industry defined outcomes, or use content other than settlement related topics.
- The program is open to all new arrivals with low levels of English –aside from legislative eligible criteria; there are no "pre requisites" in terms of age, educational background, goals. (e.g. in 2011 – 2012, 49% of AMEP clients had significantly low levels of formal education or written literacy in their first language[11])
- Offering flexible delivery modes to fit in with other settlement events. For example, a client can transfer to Distance Learning or have a home tutor if they are working or unable to attend formal classes for health, family or other reasons.
- Taking account of differing starting points, capacity to learn, and the non-linear nature of settlement. A much longer, more flexible arrangement is allowed to complete the program than in mainstream programs which have pre requisites for entry, and are generally delivered within set and tighter time frames with the focus on a linear progression to a defined credential.
- Counselling to develop individual pathway plans for each AMEP client, to help them gain maximum value from their AMEP hours in relation to their individual goals.
- Maximising the involvement of volunteers to provide individual tutoring to better meet specific needs

Flexibility is regarded as a significant element of the AMEP by DIAC: Service Providers' are asked specifically in the annual reports to DIAC to include commentary on how the following have been achieved:
- flexibility,
- cultural sensitivity of timetabling,
- intensity,
- location and mode of class (include examples of alternative learning environments, excursions) and
- initiatives to support specific groups of clients e.g. women at risk, emerging new communities.

Effecting the transition to mainstream
All AMEP clients have low to intermediate levels of English. The AMEP provides a transition or bridge to mainstream, which may include basic understanding and communication in day to day situations, community interaction, accessing mainstream services, further training, and for some clients, employment.

To situate this in a vocational training context, as an example, AMEP clients by definition do not have enough English to get into a mainstream VET course. The AMEP can assist clients who have

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[11] Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2011–2012 Annual Report p.250

a further training goal in several ways to prepare for this next step: through counselling and pathway planning, English tuition related to this goal and information about the VET system and expectations in Australia. This bridge or transition to VET is necessary because the level of English for clients in the AMEP and on exit from the AMEP is insufficient to access mainstream training.[12] Similarly, the Counselling service, the 20 hour Settlement course, the 510 hours of English tuition and SLPET all contribute to the broader transition towards mainstream participation.

4. How could the impact of the AMEP on meeting government's settlement objectives for the program be measured?

4.1 Conceptual Frameworks

The paper has talked a lot about "Settlement" as if we all somehow implicitly understand and agree what that means. There are many perceptions of Settlement – the individual's perspective, the policy maker's perspective, the service provider perspective, the broader community perspective to name a few.

The current AMEP model has components which we assume contribute to individuals' settlement but the impact of these on settlement is not, in the main, measured and reported. Several current KPIs respond to administrative contractual arrangements rather that the settlement impact of activities undertaken in the program.

There are a number of conceptual frameworks, outcomes measures and indicators, developed by various agencies to assist in designing programs and services which achieve effective settlement outcomes. Although there are differences in each, they fundamentally capture the same content. Some include immediate (or short term), medium and long term settlement outcomes, acknowledging that Settlement is a continuum, an on-going process taking place over time. In common, all recognise

- settlement as a dynamic process (rather than a clearly defined linear process), impacted by individuals' characteristics and demographic attributes, personal situations and
- community factors; and that various aspects of settlement are interrelated and interdependent, many occurring simultaneously.

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[12] AMEP eligibility ends at ILSPR 2 or "Basic Social Proficiency" which is defined as "Able to satisfy basic social needs, and routine needs pertinent to everyday commerce and to linguistically undemanding 'vocational' fields." The AMEP exit level equates to approximately an IELTS score of 4.5. Entry level industry based VET courses (not Foundation Skills courses) require at least 5.5. IELTS is the International English Language Testing System is used by Australian TAFE Institutes and Universities to rate English language levels of overseas students applying for entry to higher education programs. Requisite scores for entry vary for different courses.

Australian Government Settlement Framework

The Australia Government's framework for understanding settlement outcomes has five Settlement Dimensions each linked with Key Settlement Indicators.[13]

Social Participation	Economic Well being	Personal Well being	Independence	Life satisfaction / Being Connected to the Community
English Proficiency	Employment circumstances	Physical Health	Access to transport	Sense of belonging in Australia
Participation in Education and training	Level of Income	Mental Health	Access and use of community and government services	Sense of being treated well by the local community
Participation in community life (e.g. schools, sports)	Level of debt	Self esteem		
	Job Satisfaction	Relationships		Level of discrimination and cultural / religious expression
	Satisfaction with accommodation		Source of income	
Citizenship			Ability to make life choices	
			Gender equality	

Canadian Settlement Service and Standards Framework

Canada has a national Settlement Service and Standards Framework[14] with detailed activities outcomes, indicators and measures. The excerpts below are a few examples from the Evaluation Framework for Citizenship and Immigration Canada's Settlement Programs. In Canada these are proposed as ways to answer the question "To what extent have settlement services contributed to the intermediate outcomes of clients?"

Outcome	Indicators
Increased ability to communicate	• # % of clients who use English or French in their daily lives • Level of clients' comfort in using English or French in the wider community
Improved ability to independently access community resources and services	# % of clients who feel confident in undertaking day to day tasks and accessing services such as banking, employment, shopping, medical appointments, government services, etc. • # of community services that are accessible to newcomers through interpretation, hours of service, cultural sensitivity, etc.
Improved ability to meet personal goals, such as further education, employment or income improvement	% of clients who feel training has helped them meet personal goals # % of clients who report increased confidence in their ability to achieve future personal goals • # and % of clients who access further education • Service providers reports of clients' improved ability in the above

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[13] Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2012. The Settlement Journey: Strengthening Australia through migration. p13

[14] http://integration-net.ca/english/ini/vsi-isb/conference2/working-travail/p04-04.htm

Clients develop realistic goals and plans	# and % who report that they have identified or re defined their employment plans or personal goals based on increased awareness of barriers or options
Clients adjust to Canadian life and culture and deal with issues that result from resettlement and adjustment	# and % of clients who report a change in lifestyle, attitude or practice that reflect Canadian norms and culture such as parenting, gender roles, social recreational activities, banking and budgeting
Clients meet personal family needs and pursue improvements	# and % of clients who report they have used mainstream services and systems to meet settlement needs such as shelter, status, documentation, employment and educational counselling, day care, or to obtain basic entitlements such as social security and health care.
Clients interact with mainstream society	# and % of clients who report that they participate or volunteer in community or school activities.

Measuring social integration

Also from Canada, Dr Susan McGrath, from the Centre for Refugee Studies at York University in Toronto presented the following as a way of conceptualising the measurement of social integration[15].

Markers and Means	→	Employment	Housing	Education	Health
Social Connection	→	Social Bridges	Social Bonds	Social Links	
Facilitators	→	Language and Cultural Knowledge		Safety and Stability	
Foundation	→	Rights and Citizenship			

Examples of Indicators:

Social Bonds	Connections with family / co ethnic groups Co ethnic relationships and networks
Social Bridges	Connections with other communities External relationships and networks
Social Links	Connections to state structures and institutions Accessing and using services, civic engagement, citizenship

Mapping Social Cohesion

Professor Andrew Markus in the introduction to the Scanlon Foundation surveys states that there is no agreed single definition of social cohesion. "Most current definitions dwell on intangibles, such as sense of belonging, attachment to the group, willingness to participate and to share outcomes." [16] Although not specifically about settlement per se the Scanlon- Monash Index of Social Cohesion (SMI) provides indicators which touch on one of the government's key objectives for the AMEP.

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[15] Dr Susan McGrath was Director of the Centre for Refugee Studies at York University in Toronto, 2004 – 2012. http://crs.yorku.ca/ Presentation at Brotherhood of St Laurence 04/04/2013 on Canada/Australia Projects in Support of Karen Refugees: Post-Secondary Education and Settlement Research.

[16] Markus, A. 2012 Mapping Social Cohesion: The Scanlon Foundation Surveys National Report. Scanlon Foundation, Australian Multicultural Foundation and Monash University www.arts.monash.edu.au/mapping-population

The Scanlon-Monash Index of Social Cohesion (SMI) provides an overview in five core domains of social cohesion.

Belonging	Shared values, identification with Australia, trust. Indication of pride in the Australian way of life and culture, sense of belonging, importance of maintaining the Australian way of life and culture
Social justice and equity	Evaluation of national policies. Views on the adequacy of financial support for people on low incomes. The gap between high and low incomes, Australia as a land of opportunity, trust in the Australian government.
Participation	Voluntary work, political and co-operative involvement. Voted in an election, signed a petition, contacted a member of parliament , participated in a boycott, attended a protest
Acceptance and rejection	Experience of discrimination, attitudes towards minorities and newcomers
Worth	Life satisfaction and happiness, future expectations. Satisfaction with present financial situation and indication of happiness over the last year.

AMES Settlement Framework

AMES developed a settlement framework in 2010 to underpin all our services to new arrivals and to help identify priority areas for action in relation to short, medium and longer term settlement outcomes. The Framework has four key social and economic determinants of settlement linked to specific outcomes. An excerpt below:

KEY SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DETERMINANTS OF SETTLEMENT			
Health and Wellbeing - Good physical and mental health - Access to key community and government services and resources - Involvement in settler and host community activities	**Education** - English language proficiency - Access to education: pre schools - School - Further education and training	**Employment** - Access to social security and employment services - Supportive and safe workplaces - Secure employment	**Safety and Security** - Safe and secure accommodation - Freedom from violence and discrimination - Boding capital with settler community - Bridging capital with host community
SHORT TO MEDIUM TERM SETTLEMENT OUTCOMES FOR INDIVIDUALS			
Orientation - Understands and can access Australian systems - Can independently manage emergency and local services **Health – Physical & Mental** Understands systems and can manage own health care **Financial Management** Can manage banking and own finances **Social engagement** Can participate socially	**Education** Understands systems and is enrolled in appropriate education program/s **English language** - Has oral communication skills - Has literacy and numeracy skills **Youth** Have social / life skills **Employment preparation** Has vocational skill sets Can access education, training or employment pathways	**Social Security** Understands Centrelink system benefits and obligations **Employment** - Has access to job search support - Understands Australian workplace conditions and job opportunities - Has Australian work experience	**Accommodation** Has safe, affordable and secure accommodation **Australian laws** Basic understanding of critical laws **Family relationships/Youth** Understands and can access services/programs **Bonding capital** Has established connections with own settler community

Attribution Issues

It is difficult to prove direct relationships between specific settlement services and longer term outcomes. Whilst the AMEP is one program that contributes to settlement many factors beyond the settlement programs contribute to settlement and social inclusion. Even in the short term any one settlement program contributes to, but is not solely responsible for an individual's settlement. Other factors such as the presence of family and friends, the receptiveness of the community, employers and service providers to new arrivals, the existence of an established community (or not), economic stability, health status, or individual personality factors also influence the settlement process.

4.2 Application of frameworks to measuring settlement outcomes in the AMEP

Each component of the current AMEP model assumes a contribution to individuals' settlement. Currently the contribution or impact of all components of the program to the clients' settlement are not measured or reported. There is an opportunity to consider all aspects of the AMEP with a view to developing robust indicators which measure the impact of the program on settlement and highlight the unique contribution of the AMEP to settlement.

For example, in terms of English, outcomes in addition to an ESL curriculum (such as CSWE) could be reported. Reporting only CSWE outcomes contributes to the perception that the AMEP is an "English only" program, focussed on a pathway to "native speaker" proficiency and attainment of certificates. Reporting that a client achieved 8 CSWE language learning outcomes (the current KPI), for example, doesn't reflect the purpose for learning English or what the client can now do in English.

Given the settlement purpose and context used for language learning, the impact of the program on settlement should be a greater focus of measurement and reporting. The only indicator of settlement outcomes in the current contract is after the 20 hour Settlement information course[17]. Measuring settlement outcomes would be better placed after the 510 hours, rather than on exit from 20 hours of the Settlement course, and would take account of all program inputs.

Settlement measures and indicators should also take account of different starting points and focus on immediate or short term outcomes. Client perception of the value or impact of the program on their settlement is a central component of the data collection.

The following table provides a brief snapshot of current measures and indicators based on KPIs in the AMEP General Services contract. It highlights gaps in the measurement of outcomes and opportunities to improve some indicators to better capture settlement outcomes resulting from AMEP.

Outcome	Current measure / indicator	Data source	Notes
English language skills	A minimum of 80% of AMEP Clients complete 8 or more English language learning outcomes on exit. A minimum of 45% of AMEP Clients achieve a CSWE certificate on exit.	ARMS	Language outcomes reported in a de contextualised way. Only English – not settlement is captured
Settlement information and cultural orientation	A minimum of 85% of AMEP Clients on exit demonstrate improved settlement outcomes through the completion of one or more settlement courses.	Self-assessment of skills and knowledge gains via the settlement course (AMES)	Measures 20 hours only. Since the whole AMEP is focussed on Settlement, its logical to demonstrate "improved settlement

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[17] A minimum of 85% of AMEP Clients on exit demonstrate improved settlement outcomes through the completion of one or more settlement courses (AMEP General Services Contract KPI 2.3)

			outcomes" after 510 hrs.
Establishment of social connections	No current measures		
Transitions to further training and employment	Minimum of 20% of the total number of SLPET Clients gain at least 15 hours per week paid employment within 1 month of completion of the Course. Minimum of 60% of SLPET Clients move into further education or training within 2 months of completion of the course.	ARMS	KPIs indicate the transition to mainstream Settlement may include confidence to enter the labour market, not just working, so employment outcomes may be more accurately captured after a longer period

Clients: a key data source

Clients will be a key data source in ascertaining the impact of the AMEP on their settlement: examples include client surveys, including (potentially) a revised client satisfaction survey, focus groups, self-reports, case studies, destination surveys, large scale sampling via longitudinal studies.

Focussing on the client as a key data source will make it possible to work with particular cohorts of AMEP participants to identify indicators and measures that are relevant and realistic for specific client groups with different starting points.

AMES has undertaken one study that sought to collect data on the impact of the AMEP on settlement. This provides an indication of what could potentially be undertaken on a larger scale, sampling clients across all states. AMES undertook a longitudinal study in three waves between 2008 and 2010. The study sampled 250 AMEP participants and reported findings from the 186 participants who remained in the study until Wave 3. The participants in the survey were generally representative of AMEP clients overall for the period in which participants were selected.

The broad objective of the study was to investigate two themes:
- how the AMEP impacts on the settlement of new migrants and refugees with low levels of English
- the early vocational and employment pathways for people participating in the AMEP.

In the first part of each survey, participants were asked a series of questions about their knowledge of Australian systems and services, and their use of English. In the second part of each survey, participants were asked about their employment before arrival, as well as within Australia.

Both quantitative and qualitative data was collected using the survey tool. Additional qualitative data was collected through a series of focus group. These included two groups that focused on the particular areas needing to be addressed in future data collection to measure the broader role of the AMEP in settlement. One of these groups explored the overall impact of the AMEP on settlement and a second group explored the usefulness of the AMEP for work-related content.

The study found that the AMEP is an important source of information for participants. There was a lot of variation in levels of knowledge people already have on arrival indicating a need for customization of information. AMEP classes appeared to be a more significant source of

information for refugees who were less likely to arrive with a contact in Australia and have a more limited range of resources for finding further information than migrants. Many of the migrant participants in this study reported already having a high level of knowledge about some Australian systems and services on arrival.

Participant comments on how the AMEP impacted on early settlement experiences

"Language learning is very important for health, banking, Centrelink, making friends, socialising and living in the community, communicating with others. English language is important for every purpose because if we don't know English language how can we do everyday things, especially in the workplace". **(Migrant, Cambodia, male)**

"It was very helpful to learn about the Australian culture, there were lots of activities and social opportunities which is good because I didn't want to stay inside the classroom all the time. It was good to learn about other things like finding a job, a house, etc." **(Migrant, USSR, female)**

"I think AMEP is a good program for new migrants in Australia. From language side as well as the Australian culture and Government system and particularly to help you in the hard time when they are in a new place." **(Migrant, China, male)**

"I have absolutely been changed. Because, first of all, to belong to the community, you must have language. I feel belonging. Now I can write and I can speak. This is the first step on my pathway." **(Refugee, Lebanon, male)**

Possible approaches

1 An agreed definition of Settlement
Before being able to measure the AMEP's contribution to Settlement an agreed definition of Settlement is required. Subsequently Settlement outcomes need to be articulated including the degree to which the AMEP can realistically contribute. Finally indicators and measures of these settlement outcomes would then need to be developed, agreed and their application piloted.

2 Capturing the contribution of all aspects of the AMEP
Rather than only KPIs which focus on inputs, activities and / or administrative aspects of the contract, there is an opportunity to consider all inputs in light of their intended impact on settlement. A good example of measuring the transition to mainstream (as an indicator of Settlement) is the KPI for SLPET.

There is potential to pilot the following:
* Measuring the impact on settlement after the 510 hours (not after the 20 hour settlement course) i.e. what do client use the English they learnt in the AMEP for? What do they know about mainstream services and systems as a result of participating in the program?
* Measuring the Counselling service contribution to settlement, focussing on linkages post AMEP
* Measuring the impact of volunteer tutors, focussing on personal responses to settlement needs.

3 Client Experience and Satisfaction Survey
As noted earlier the clients' voice will be critical in finding out how the AMEP impacted on their settlement. A pilot project to review the current Client Satisfaction Survey with a view to capturing settlement outcomes from the point of view of program participants is well worth considering. The first step would involve identifying the measures and indicators for different clients groups, revising the survey instrument and administering the survey with a trial group of AMEP learners. The objective is to capture immediate AMEP settlement outcomes and different measures for different client groups.

4 The perspective of former AMEP participants

A large scale sampling exercise to identify the most effective aspects of the AMEP in terms of settlement from the perspective of more settled (former AMEP participants) migrants and refugees. This work could link with DIAC's current longitudinal study "Language Training and Settlement: Are they related? to build the knowledge base around settlement outcomes and indicators over time.

The approaches suggested above provide scope for the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data and the development of the robust evidence base needed to clearly position the program in settlement, meeting its intended settlement objectives: "that is, a program that assists people to settle, connect and integrate into the Australian community and life through learning English, rather than a program that [simply] delivers English tuition." DIAC's conference paper

Conclusion

The AMEP business model introduced in July 2011 provides a welcome and renewed focus on settlement and the transition to mainstream, through the advent of the Settlement course, the Counselling Service and the SLPET course. These join the well-established settlement focussed English component. This is a world class model of integrated settlement language provision, addressing several facets of settlement simultaneously: Language, information, cultural orientation, social connection, pathway planning, and transition to mainstream.

DIAC's proposed evaluation presents a great opportunity to collect both qualitative and quantitative data to robustly demonstrate the significant contribution the AMEP makes to the initial settlement of new arrivals.

AMES looks forward to developing these ideas further with our AMEP colleagues as the project proceeds.