

Preventing Perpetuation of Structural Violence in the Workplace: An Australian Settlement Services Case Study

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Abstract : Service and advocacy organisations that serve refugee populations are often staffed by a large percentage of former refugees themselves, and this carries a number of implications for refugee rights, specifically economic and social rights. This paper makes an argument for the importance of introducing an understanding of intersectionality theory into organizations who provide services to and employ, refugee staff. The benefits of this are threefold; on an individual level it reduces the risks of burn out, vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue while increasing employee satisfaction and development, at an organizational level services become more effective, and at a systems level it helps reduce structural violence, which may itself have been a contributing factor in the movement of refugee staff from their origin countries. In support of this argument, a case study of an Australian settlement services organization is provided. Mixed methods research, utilising both qualitative and quantitative data, measured the perceived efficacy of diversity management tools at the organization and the impact this had on staff performance, retention and wellbeing. The paper also draws on strategic human resource and reward management, diversity management, international development and intersectionality texts.

Keywords : structural violence, employment, human resource management, intersectionality

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