

Refugees in 2019_Responding to record high levels of displacement

Sharon Lee

Hi, welcome to Brotherhood Talks.

Heikma Siraj

Just remembered about one of my clients, about these misconceptions, and I remember he told me like "You're always dependent, you're asylum seeker, you just don't want to work. You want to - it's our money, you know, taxpayers' money" and he was really upset about that.

Dr Dina Bowman

So important that when we talk about refugees or people seeking asylum, we don't homogenise them. They're different and with different skills and attributes and I think women particularly can face challenges.

Sharon Lee

What are the challenges facing refugees in Australia and around the world? In this Brotherhood Talk, we hear from a range of speakers, including a research specialist and people who came to Australia as refugees. Brotherhood of St Laurence executive director, Conny Lenneberg, began by citing United Nations figures on the scale of the global crisis.

Conny Lenneberg

Every minute 30 people leave behind everything to escape war and every two seconds a person is displaced. The world is witnessing at the moment the highest level of displacement we have ever seen. There are almost 71 million people in the world today who have been forcibly displaced from their homes and of these, 25.9 million, so almost 26 million, are people who've crossed international borders. And we know that those who cross international borders walk approximately 2 billion kilometres to safety. That is amazing. Those are amazing journeys.

Of these refugees, those that cross international borders, almost 60% come from three countries alone, from South Sudan, from Afghanistan and Syria. And that's not surprising because we know the wars and the length of the wars that have continued in those countries, that have displaced people again and again, the waves of refugees that have been forced to run, leaving everything behind.

Australia's intake is a little under 14,000 a year and there's a lot of discussion about that intake and it is important for us to recognise our international obligations. It is a tiny number with respect to the real issues of refugees in the world today and that's why we want to, in our discussion of World Refugee Day today, is to think about it globally as well as to act locally. We need to see it in its entirety and not just a problem in how it presents here in Australia. We need to see and respond with compassion, solidarity and action, both globally and locally.

I wanted to share with you a little bit about my experience because I've worked - spent quite a number of years working in some of those complex humanitarian emergencies and in a number of these countries directly. So we know that 85% of refugees are displaced into low and middle income countries. One of the greatest signs of the desperation of the refugees is the way in which refugees from Somalia

and from Yemen have fled to each other's countries. Such is the desperation. To flee from Somalia to Yemen is not to flee to a - it's not a journey you take to go to a place of plenty. It is absolute desperation. And now to see Yemenis fleeing back to Somalia, which is still struggling with war.

I did a lot of work in Lebanon and the generosity of many of these countries where refugees run in the initial instance is extraordinary. Lebanon is a country of 4.5 million people. They have hosted for the last seven years at least 1.5 million people fleeing from the Syria conflict. That is a lot of people and they're people who are living in unfinished buildings, they're on construction sites, in drainage pipes, they're living in tents, there's no refugee camps, they're just scattered in small settlements across abandoned lands and yet they're not being pushed across the borders or not yet.

That seems to be changing. That is a huge load which other countries take and we really do need to be ashamed that we make such a fuss about the small responsibility that we have, when you look at the generosity of countries much less equipped to deal and to provide welcome and shelter and safety to people who are fleeing from the most terrible situations.

I worked in Lebanon and my agency, the agency that I worked for, worked with the World Food Program. And when initially when refugees arrived, they were given \$30 per person in their family a day in order to meet their needs for survival. Lebanon has a good economy so we didn't need to be providing food, we needed to provide money and then identify places where they could purchase foods. That worked very well except when international attention wanes, suddenly support drops off. So my staff were having to go to families and saying, "Sorry, from next month on we won't be giving you \$30 per person a month. We'll be giving you 13 and only for the first five people in your family."

Now, that was around 2015 and if you remember, that's when the exodus from Syria and Iraq conflict flowed up into Europe. And I spoke to people that said, "I don't want to leave but I'm asking myself will it be \$10 next month? Will it be \$1 the month after that? Do I wait until my children are starving or do I move while I still can?" That's the kind of desperation we're talking about.

I worked in Iraq and when ISIS came flooding across the Nineveh Plains and we saw huge numbers of people, Muslims, Christians, Yazidis, pushed out and running into the Kurdish region of Iraq for support. There was a massive international response for a short period of time that again provided support. That response is no longer happening and now these families are wondering where to go. You saw in the video, you see it on your television screens. These are totally ruined cities and you have to ask yourself, who is bombing those cities? We can't be part of a campaign that engages in war and not be part of the humanitarian responding to the humanitarian consequences of those bombings. People can't reestablish their lives without support. It doesn't happen without support.

I wanted to share two stories of two women, a child and a woman, who stay in my mind. Halima in Lebanon, whose husband was killed outside of Aleppo. She had nine children under the age of 14. She was living in winter when I met her in camp. She'd not yet received any support whatsoever. The children had nothing on their feet and

we needed to see what can we do to get them just to survive that next night before trying to connect them into limited services.

And little Heba I was very privileged, as part of an attempt to raise awareness in the world about the refugee problems and that exodus from Syria and Iraq in 2016-17. And I travelled with Richard Flanagan and Ben Quilty and we travelled on the road from Lebanon through Greece and up into Serbia and we met a little girl called [Heba and Heba was six years old and we were talking to her parents and Ben was just drawing with the kids in this transit station and he asked her to "Draw me a picture of home." She picked up the black pencils, she drew a picture of a house the way any child that age would draw, a square with a triangle on top, and then she drew a double barreled helicopter gunship. I was quite surprised that a child could draw that. With three very clear barrel bombs coming out of that plane. And those barrel bombs had perspective. So this was a child who normally, you don't see children drawing with perspective, but she had seen, looking up, that the bombs closer to the ground were bigger than the bombs that were further away. And then two stick figures. And the only colour she used was the colour red around those stick figures that were lying on the ground. A six year old child. That is the enduring image.

I want to end with a story in Uganda, which is an extraordinary story again of generosity. So many people have fled from the war in South Sudan and have fled over generations now from that war. And with the latest wave again Uganda has put them not into camps with great big walls around them, it's given small plots of land to refugee families to allow them to build a home, to have that sense of place again and sense of family and enabled them to do some local farming.

However, we also have extremely vulnerable people there, children who are unaccompanied, whose parents are gone, perhaps died, perhaps separated, and they need separate programs for that. And so we're seeing again other countries really respond with generosity to the suffering that people have that come to them.

Why is the Brotherhood interested? Well, we have a longstanding commitment in settlement services in Australia. We believe that the Ecumenical Migration Centre, which was set up 60 years ago, was probably one of the first in the southern hemisphere as a generalist settlement agency. And in our experience, we know that if you help people to settle, they settle well and that's when we all benefit. We unleash the opportunity and the talents that people have when they come to this country and that's why we're so committed to ensuring that settlement services should be adequate to the need.

We know that there are endless examples of refugees and how they've made stunning contributions to our nations and we know that poor settlement experiences similarly produce real devastation that impacts on everyone. We've worked hand in hand with multicultural communities, working with families and children, with employment seekers, with businesses and doing cross-cultural training to raise awareness. And we've also undertaken dedicated research and so we want to have the opportunity to hear a little bit more about that in a minute.

But for now I'd love to introduce to you Joseph Youhana who [inaudible] Syrian from Iraq and he's been 13 years in Australia. Heikma Siraj from Ethiopia, who's joined us. She's been seven years in Australia. Noura Hachem from Syria, who's been here

almost six years. And Mubarek Imam, who's been here three years. Now, Joseph is our program manager in our settlements, youth and families team. He is a community ambassador for Melbourne Victory and a long time global refugee advocate that still provides advice and supports the work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees as well as the Human Rights Council.

Heikma is the recruitment and field officer in our Given the Chance program in Flemington. She's the Victorian government ambassador for vocational education and training. She's a community advisor on the Royal Women's Hospital and she's the secretary of the East Asian Professional Support Group.

Noura also works in our Given the Chance programs in Flemington. She's a recruitment and employment engagement coordinator and she works at The Huddle in North Melbourne as well. She has a Bachelor of Economics from Syria and a Bachelor of Design in Australia.

And finally, last but not least, Mubarek is a youth coach at our Broadmeadows site where we offer a range of youth program. He's the president of the Youth Council of the Eritrean Australian Djibouti Association, a committee member of the Eritrean Australian Association. He's been recognised as a young emerging leader by the City of Yarra and he also sits on the gender equity working group within the Brotherhood of St Laurence. Please make them welcome.

Okay, so Mubarek, I've got one for you to lead on. So how easy is it for refugees and asylum seekers to find secure and affordable housing in Australia?

Mubarek Imam

I think even to Australians it's very hard nowadays. I know a lot of people who have good income but they will still have to live with some friends, two or three people, to share a house because it's really ridiculous prices. I don't think I will ever be able to buy a house in Australia because I don't think I'll be able to afford it. But let me tell you about my experience with homelessness. I was homeless when I first came in and because I was homeless, as a result my family became homeless as well because we used to share the income to pay our rent.

Accessing the service was hell. My mother was threatened if she didn't go and rent a private rent, her child might be taken and this is - she is not the only person who have heard about this. So I would say the experience with the service providers of homelessness is not great. Yes, we understand there is a housing crisis but I encourage the service providers to feel the homeless people as well, to listen to them, be compassionate.

I couch surfed for about six months and then after a long fight, refuge after refuge, transition housing, I have my public housing. But I know there are a lot of people who have been waiting on the list for more than 10 years. I know right now the number is 44,000 people and 50% of them are on the waiting list. I think we should encourage the government to build more public housing so that it can become accessible and affordable.

Joseph Youhana

Can I check on that? My experience in this area, previous work was dealing with the -

supporting refugees' arrival to Australia, to Melbourne, to settle them in the private housing and these refugees were explained through trainings before arrival is that there is two type of housing, public and private. So people were thinking that when they arrive to Melbourne they will be taken to public housing and all works good. And that was a reality unclear for them, that actually you need to work hard to get the private rent. And the DHHS were providing bond support and that bond was between the - the property is between 35% of your income or 35%. Actual 90% of the property we were renting to clients were around 48% of their income.

So already we're putting people at risk of being unable to pay rent, bills and survive the six to one year. It was really tough and it's still tougher now. The market price has gone up and up and people have been pushed to be to the new developed area that they are missing the good support and the public support and services. So it's a real issue that we will need to tackle ongoing.

Conny Lenneberg

It's huge. I mean, I remember going out when Hutch was still out in Epping and sat in on a presentation where we were told that 17% of Victoria's refugee and asylum seeker caseload lives in the city of Whittlesea. So that's a huge number of people that need support in an area that's already really poorly served and a long way away. And so it makes it much harder to respond to those needs when they're consolidated and I was recently in Dandenong with our team out there that were offering various employment services and it was really devastating to hear of the challenge of finding accommodation.

More and more people were coming and we don't offer homelessness services there and they were saying there was nowhere even to refer people to, that the gateway, the door had closed, that there was such a large number of people seeking shelter. And when you look at this morning and looking around the room and how rugged up we are, imagine having to spend the night in a car or outside, rough sleeping. It's a big concern. So Joseph, you've got the microphone. What strengths do you see of refugees that constantly get underestimated?

Joseph Youhana

There's a lot of experience, there's a lot of willing, there's a lot of passion to restart, to reset your life in a new country. People been waiting for years, for months until that little hope was opened through the humanitarian program, to Australia or to Canada or to USA, that yes, now I can take my family. Now I can start after all this horrible journey, leaving my house, my family, my friends, my university and work, and start a new life.

So the underestimation is that we don't understand what we're doing when we come here. Some of the segment of the community, I feel that giving the first local experience, it's impossible and people are struggling to get the first local experience. How do we recognise their education, their work history? How much there is intelligence in the work that people bring here from overseas that's not been considered heavily. Organisation like Brotherhood, it's leading. Our teams are diverse. We give opportunities to people on the grounds, we give the first - actually two of my staff members, it's their first job to start in Australia was through us, MCT team. So I'm really proud that we are opening these doors for people to galvanise themselves and to start moving on their life and their future lead.

Conny Lenneberg

Thanks. Anyone else like to speak to that? Noura?

Noura Hachem

I might just add to what Joseph said is that the strength as well, like it's people who've come from different backgrounds, different experiences. They could have very different point of views about many other things. So to get to know and learn from their experiences, that adds value to your company and organisation, I believe.

Conny Lenneberg

So Heikma, yes, actually you are the next one here. So what advice would you give to a refugee that's just arrived in Melbourne?

Heikma Siraj

Yeah, my advice would be be open to new cultures, be involved, don't be afraid to ask questions and access services and also socialise. Networking is really important to get a job, to get to know about new cultures, new language, to improve themselves. So that's really important. Don't be afraid to talk to people who you don't know. It's absolutely fine to say hello and open conversation. So that's my advice.

Noura Hachem

If I was to add, Heikma mentioned that don't be afraid to ask and I think this is a really important one because in like back in my culture in Syria, like it's very - for example, if you've got mental health issues, you can't talk about that because if you say that people will talk about you because it's something embarrassing to have that. So when we come here and coming from war or any other situation, most of us would probably have that. It's important to seek help, to ask for that. Services are here to help. No one is going to judge you. So feel free to do so.

I was lucky to have my brother here when I arrived and he was here from before we were and he helped us in knowing a lot of things. But if he wasn't, I would not be able to do anything on my own. So we always take pride of we want to do well, we want to do it without asking. Like, in Syria, we just offer help. We tell people, "What can I do for you? How can I help you?" But so it's hard when you come here, you the person asking for help, but just want to say there is no shame in that. Just do it.

Joseph Youhana

I want to finish that people when they arrive, before they arrive they write story, the application to the countries that they want to go and they share their story and the end of the story, usually they do re-ensure that we would like to help the economics, we would like to be a good people when we arrive to your country. And I think we need to continue building that promise and make it reality. Refugees, when they become former refugees, there is a challenge to settle, to be equipped with the tools that they can work and be employed, but it's also very important that how do they make connections with the people and how do they build experience? That's very important to be understood by refugees.

Conny Lenneberg

Let me ask Mubarek to you, if you could tell us how do you go about discussing refugee issues, these are questions which have come beforehand, with Australians and sort of put Australians in quotation marks because who are they? Who are we? Who

are we altogether? But with people who are not refugees in this country, how do you go about discussing those issues when we know that this has become a very toxic debate in some places, there's a lot of misinformation, how do you engage in that conversation?

Mubarek Imam

I like to believe that I've handled this issue really well since I first arrived in Australia and that's by responding, not reacting. The first thing that I would do is provide that safe space for them to talk and express their opinions and then I would respond to what they're saying by getting the facts straight or even if there is any misconception, to treat it. But they don't necessarily have negative ideas about refugees but ignorance or you basically don't know. So it's about that sharing the awareness, not making assumption that that person is whether racist or very discriminative, but let's provide that safe space first and then once we hear the opinion, let's respond, not react.

Conny Lenneberg

Thank you. Noura, how do you find that as a woman engaging in those conversations? Is it different?

Noura Hachem

It could be, yep. It could be. And there has been some situations where I've, yeah, I've kind of been confronted by discriminative people but what I did back then was I walked away. I don't think that was the right thing to do but because I felt like it was a situation that I was not familiar with and it was just a human reaction of I would either yell or run and I chose to run. But I would say now it's maybe not run but not actually also confront in a bad way but to prove that my capabilities, what can I do, and I think I've been doing that throughout my career, I've been proving that refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, we can do anything that any other human being can do. So yeah, as a woman, male, female, doesn't matter.

Conny Lenneberg

Thank you. Heikma?

Heikma Siraj

Yeah, I've been to different situations like that but I'm more like usually I try to be calm and try to explain things. Just remembered about one of my clients, about these misconceptions, and I remember he told me like someone told him, "You're always dependent, you're asylum seeker, you just don't want to work. You want to - it's our money, you know, taxpayers' money" and he was really upset about that and he actually said, "You know, in my culture man is the provider of the house and I lost my dignity taking Centrelink money" and he was desperately looking for a job and we helped him find the job and he was really happy supporting his family now. So there are misconceptions but you have to explain to people. Sometimes, like Noura said, like Noura and Mubarek said, it's ignorance so you just have to explain and be calm.

Just remembered about one of my clients, about these misconceptions, and I remember he told me like "You're always dependent, you're asylum seeker, you just don't want to work. You want to - it's our money, you know, taxpayers' money" and he was really upset about that.

Conny Lenneberg

Thank you for sharing. And let me ask, because as I've said earlier, Joseph has been a global refugee advocate for a long time and has been working with both the UNHCR and the Human Rights Commission and he's heading off soon to Geneva to be part of another consultation. So Joseph, tell us a little bit more about that work and your side trip to Lebanon on the way there.

Joseph Youhana

Thank you, Conny. So before I start with the whole - but maybe I'll answer now, I can answer what the question, because you asked a question. Building on what your question is, we are trying - we cannot solve the world problems because every year there is around 6 to 8 million people generated of refugees and as Conny said earlier, that every two seconds there's new displaced person, forcibly displaced. We didn't leave the country because we like - it's not optional, it's by force we left the countries.

Our role is - my role is in the UNHCR Switzerland is I'm one of the global refugees trying to representing NGOs in Australia to speak on behalf of the refugees. And my reason is to go to Lebanon this time is to revalidate, to get accreditation from the refugee camps, to see what's happening on the ground and then I attend to the conference. The idea behind it is to maybe check in, examine what's been happening on the numbers what UNHCR is telling us and how much there is hidden stories not told in Lebanon or in Jordan or in Turkey and Egypt and Afghanistan.

My role is to try to work on with the community based organisation, with individuals, to understand the good practices happening. How on earth is 85% of the people who have been displaced or are refugees are sitting in the neighbouring countries? How can they survive? We're talking about millions. I mean, and in Australia we making a fuss about 18,000 people every year and there's a lot of - I mean, we have been crucified as refugees in the media and in different type of medias.

So how can we learn from these countries, the passion, the involvement with the people on the grounds. I think my role is to be on a civil level. I cannot be involved because I don't have the power or the authority to be a political level. But as a civil society, I think we have a big role in Australia and in the western countries, especially I would be relying on the people who are from the diaspora communities. How much they are trying to support the cause and how much they are trying to solve. Everyone has a story but everyone can do something, little bit can change.

Conny Lenneberg

Thank you very much, Joseph. And on that note, please join me in thanking our amazing panelists today.

Sharon Lee

Dr Dina Bowman is a principal research fellow with the Brotherhood of St Laurence. She leads research on economic security and employment. She talked about labour market challenges and opportunities in general and for those who've come to Australia as refugees.

Dr Dina Bowman

So in order to understand those challenges and opportunities, we need to - and I'm talking about work and economic security, we need to understand labour market

trends more broadly. There's been well known there's a shift from manufacturing to service, the service sector. There's increased requirement for formal qualifications, there's a growth in part-time and insecure work and there are concerns about demographic aging and the impacts of technological change. So these are the things that are broadly issues in the labour market and the most recent ABS data shows that the participation rate is now at a record high of almost 66%.

So more people are in the labour market competing for jobs but wage growth is stagnating, so that people aren't necessarily earning the money they need to earn to achieve economic security. Unemployment sits at around 5.1% and underemployment is at 8.5%. So underemployment is when you're working part-time and you're wanting more hours or you should be working full time but you can only get part-time hours.

But these are aggregate figures and they vary from place to place. As our youth unemployment monitor shows, has shown, local labour markets matter and so the opportunities and challenges really vary by place. They also vary by groups of people. So young people find it particularly difficult in the current labour market So youth unemployment remains high at 11.8%, as does youth underemployment at almost 18%. So there are real challenges.

So if young people are doing it tough overall, you can see, given our previous discussion, how much harder it will be for people who are newly arrived in Australia and have refugee backgrounds. It's really difficult and I'm going to talk about some of the specific challenges and what we can do about it.

It's hard to get accurate labour force data about people seeking asylum or with refugee experience. The Building New Lives in Australia study is a large longitudinal study by the Australian Institute of Family Studies, funded by the Department of Social Services, and they found in their study that only 6% of those in the study were employed in the first wave but this rose to 23% in the third wave. And you can see from some of the insights from the previous panel, you're dealing with a lot of other challenges when you come to a new country. It's not going to be okay, let's go get a job. Even though you might need to, it's really difficult. There are a lot of challenges.

And it can be really hard to rebuild an interrupted career and for young people interrupted education as well. It can be very difficult to just keep on doing what you were doing. And we've interviewed many people who'd been professionals in their home country who were unable to continue in those roles, as I'll explain later.

So there are five main issues that I'm going to focus on, discrimination, and it was touched on and people are very diplomatic, but certainly in the research that we've done, it's a real issue. Racial discrimination, discrimination as regards of what the research calls being visibly different. And you could say different from what? Different from whom? But it's that if you don't - if you have a non-diverse workplace and you're not the same as the people in that non-diverse workforce, it's going to be hard to fit in and there can be discrimination.

Also accent, so it's lack of English language skills but accent can be - or names. Someone we interviewed who was called Mohamed said that people were joking about, "Well where's your terrorist belt? Where's your suicide belt?" So those kinds of jokes that aren't jokes can be very undermining of people. And people talked about

how jobs would disappear when they had been offered it but then they turn up and the employer would take back the offer when they saw who was the applicant.

So there are some real challenges. Now, what we can do about it, special recruitment channels can really make a difference and can act as a bridge to mainstream employment. But we do have real challenges in mainstream recruitment channels and partly that's because some - a lot of applications are screened out according to an algorithm and so if you have - if you don't meet certain criteria, you're automatically screened out. But diversity is valuable and that's why we really argue for inclusive employment because through diversity we get strength.

Another challenge is around local networks and because a job requires networks. Mark Granovetter, economic sociologist, talks about the strength of weak ties. You've got to know someone who knows somebody who knows somebody who's got a job. And if you don't know the right people who know somebody who know somebody who's got a job, you're not going to find those jobs. Because a lot of jobs aren't advertised or you mightn't necessarily know where to look for the advertisement because it's not necessarily through mainstream channels.

And certainly the employers that we've talked with in some of our research, they're risk averse, they want to take on somebody who's a known quantity and the Brotherhood can act as that kind of trusted advocate or referee because you're working with people you can say, "Yeah, we know them. We'll vouch for them." And so there's a real role for labour market intermediaries like given the chance. And they can act as a bridge to mainstream employment.

A lack of English language skills is an impediment to further education or reengaging with education and also to employment. And whilst there are refugees who are eligible for the Adult Migrant English Program, some research suggests that people can be unable to take up the opportunity because they either need to work, so you're in a kind of catch-22, you've got to work any job because you really need the money, or because they lack transport or childcare.

And I think particularly for women, and that's why it's so important that when we talk about refugees or people seeking asylum, we don't homogenise them, they're different, with different skills and attributes and I think women particularly can face challenges because they may not be able to access services because of childcare responsibilities. And so they can be locked out of the labour market.

And we've done some research about gender and culturally responsive programs. Of course because people come to arrive in Australia as refugees, they have high levels of education and professional expertise but their overseas qualifications are not recognised and valued and they may lack the documentation, academic transcripts, to prove their qualifications and that's a real challenge in getting those recognised. Particularly - and there's a role I think for professional associations to work with organisations to try to tackle that as an issue.

Limited work related language skills, a lack of professional networks and high barriers to accreditation can lock people into low paid work. And that's really painful. We've interviewed people who - highly qualified people in their home country who

are working as cleaners and it's very dispiriting. It's a lot of work that goes to maintain hope and to maintain good spirits in that kind of situation.

And this situation that I've kind of sketched is compounded by restrictive policies that further limit opportunities. For example, cuts to the Status Resolution Support Services program undermine people's ability to build new lives in Australia. SRSS, if you don't know, is a safety net for vulnerable people seeking asylum who are excluded from mainstream support services in Australia. It's a small amount of income support for rent and food, subsidised medication, et cetera.

And over the past two years the government has cut its budget for SRSS safety net by 60%, putting thousands of people at risk of compounded precarity, deteriorating health and homelessness and puts pressure also on NGOs. I should note though that the recent Victorian budget did have a \$3 million allocation to help address some of the destitution resulting from these cuts.

Our research with the researchers from Latrobe University highlights the importance of local, state and regional efforts to assist people seeking asylum and those from refugee backgrounds. And we do this very much taking a place based approach through delivery of JVEN, Jobs Victoria Employment Network Services in Epping, Flemington and Dandenong and also through the Youth Transition Support pilot program, a federal program, which takes a place based approach underpinned by joint action with the community sector, local government and employers to open up opportunities.

So I think it's really important we, despite funding and policy constraints, there are great opportunities to work together and our research with Latrobe Uni did show that organisations do develop work arounds to get around to try to support people in need to provide them with opportunities. As we know, the challenges facing people with refugee experience and those seeking asylum are multifaceted and need to be tackled in different ways at local, state, federal, regional and global levels and I'd also say individually too because the key point is people are people and we need to look after one another. And as Conny says, we need to work with solidarity, locally and globally for a just and compassionate world. Thank you.

Sharon Lee

This talk took place in June 2019 to mark World Refugee Day. Brotherhood Talks is a podcast by the Research and Policy Centre of the Brotherhood of St Laurence, working towards an Australia free of poverty. Find us online at bsl.org.au/brotherhoodtalks and join the conversation on social at [#bsltalks](https://twitter.com/bsltalks). Production by Aysha Zackariya, Raashid Zubair and me, Sharon Lee. Music by Lee Rosevere. And subscribe for more episodes of Brotherhood Talks, conversations that matter.