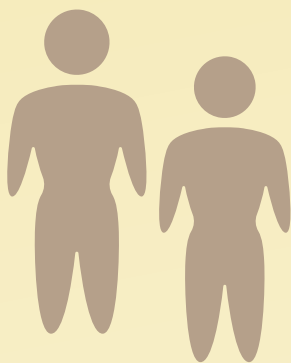


Ethnic Diversity and Ageing in Nelson

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Introduction

Nelson Multicultural Council has undertaken this research on behalf of Nelson City Council. The project gathers ten stories of residents in Nelson from a diverse ethnic background not born in New Zealand but who are ageing here.

The information gathered will highlight the positive aspects of ageing in Nelson as well as highlight some future challenges for individuals and the community as the percentage of Nelson people over sixty increases. This project specifically focused on what it is like to age in Nelson from the participant's perspective. The positives and possible challenges of future ageing in Nelson from their perspective, as well as what they are looking forward to and what they are concerned about.

This project included interviews incorporating an intergenerational component. An older person reflecting on their life and future life as they age in Nelson. A younger person from either their family or their community supporting with translation, and adding further reflection on what they think about ageing in Nelson; their hopes, aspirations, opportunities, concerns and worries.

The report will be presented back to various groups including Positive Ageing Forum, Age Concern, Community and Whanau, Connections and Nelson Tasman Settlement Forum to encourage discussion on this sector of our community and enable appropriate planning to meet future needs.

This report tells the stories of ten residents in Nelson who have come to live here from Germany, the Netherlands, Czech Republic, Samoa, Burma (Kayan), Nepal, South Africa, Japan, Burma (Chin), United Kingdom and the Philippines. Their ages range from late fifties to eighty five, with some stories including the grandchild

or child of the older parent or grandparent. Some are recent arrivals in Nelson while others have been here since the 1980s.

Five of the interviews included an intergenerational component with younger members of the family also giving their perspective on having the older person in Nelson. It was an opportunity for the young person and the older person (usually the grandparent), to talk about the flight from their country and clarify some of the history for refugee families. Being able to interpret in the interview situation highlighted the important role that youth from former refugee families play in connecting the older person with the wider community. Their English speaking and integration through school and other activities provide a critical link beyond their own community. In fact, they almost take on a leadership role for the family in navigating access to services and navigating systems and customs that are totally new to older family members.

An overarching theme was the contribution that all members make to Nelson through voluntary work outside the home, or helping with childcare and household tasks within the home. This challenges any perception that older migrants are a burden, and highlighted the valuable contribution they make to this community.

These stories give some insight into how it is to settle in Nelson, the challenges and the rewards of the choice they made to move here. It specifically looks at how it is to get older in Nelson compared with other parts of the world.

Demographic Background

Nelson's population is now over 50,000 and there are estimated to be more people aged over 65 than there are children aged under 15yo. Nelson's population is ageing and the median age is projected to increase from 42 years in 2013 to 50.5 in 2043. Between 2013 and 2043, the number of Nelson residents aged 65 and over is projected to more than double and will make up a third of the total Nelson population by 2043, compared with 17 percent in 2013.

Net migration has fluctuated in recent years, but Nelson has generally had a net gain with more people moving here than have been leaving. Between 1996 and 2006, Nelson experienced a net gain in total migration within New Zealand but a net loss in overseas migration – more people left Nelson to live overseas than the number who moved here from overseas. However, between 2008 and 2013 Nelson experience both positive net internal migration and positive net overseas migration. This is largely due to fewer people leaving Nelson to live overseas.²

According to Census 2013 data, 80 percent of older people living in Nelson in 2013 had also been living in Nelson in 2008. Two percent had been living overseas and the rest were living in other parts of New Zealand. Four percent had moved from Tasman and three percent had moved from Canterbury.

Methodology

Ten participants were identified to be interviewed from a broad range of ethnicities with half of the interviews also including a child or grandchild of the older migrant. The participants were suggested by contacts in the Nelson Multicultural Council, Victory Community Centre, Red Cross, Nelson Newcomers Network and Nelson Newbies and other networks linked in with migrants and refugees arriving into Nelson. They were selected firstly for age, then gender and a

good geographical spread. The oldest was eighty five and the youngest was fifty eight, with three men and seven woman taking part. The youngest interviewee was from the Chin community which has about five hundred members in Nelson. However, only about ten are over the age of fifty and the woman interviewed has six grandchildren and is an elder in her community.

All but one of the interviews was held in the homes of the participants to ensure the setting was comfortable and relaxed. The interviews took around an hour and notes taken were reviewed by the participants to ensure accuracy of the information. Many expressed their appreciation at being able to tell their stories, and hope that what they have experienced might resonate with other older migrants, and also provide helpful advice for others contemplating moving to Nelson in the future.

¹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2002) Ageing, Housing and Urban Development

² Nelson City Council – Ageing Population, Nelson's Older Population, Summary of Research P.1

Acknowledgements

Nelson Multicultural Council would like to thank all the participants for taking part in this project. Thank you for opening up your homes and your experiences to better inform the wider community about the joys and the challenges of ageing in Nelson.

Themes

Reason for coming to Nelson

Three of the ten participants had come to join family, children and grandchildren who had already immigrated to New Zealand. The three elder former refugees had also come to join families. One couple had moved to Nelson after the Christchurch earthquakes while another moved from Queenstown for a better retirement lifestyle. Another had moved from Auckland to Nelson for a new relationship. One woman had married a New Zealander in 1980s.

All participants felt the move to Nelson had been a positive one, and some saw it as idyllic. The happiest were those who had connected in with family or who had become part of groups such as Nelson Newbies or other activities. These groups not only provided company but also support in difficult times when there was no family around. The older former refugees living in intergenerational situations were enjoying this and were very involved in helping with young children and supporting the running of the household.

Many talked about how moving to Nelson was the best thing they had ever done.

“As a country, I am so happy to live my old age in New Zealand and especially in Nelson. I feel very safe here when there are so many things happening out in the world. Kiwis should be proud of their country – it is so beautiful and so separate from the rest of the world.”

“We're looking forward to building a new house and planting a garden. I'm also looking forward to spending time with the family that I have missed out on. I love to live near the sea, to swim in warm water. I love the fresh air, landscapes, tress and so much sunshine.”

“Our lifestyle here is wonderful! It is a very relaxed tempo and everything is on our doorstep. We have the beach, walkways, and so much to do outdoors. We feel much safer than in Europe. We could never have had the chance to own our own home in Europe or have a beautiful garden. We love our house, the neighbourhood and have quickly made friends, mostly through Nelson Newcomers Network. We knew we had to get out and meet people and now we have more friends than we ever had before in Christchurch.”

“I really respect the New Zealand government and am so happy to have a safe place to live. We can become whatever we want to be. Eat what we want to eat. Drink what we want to drink. It is amazing. It is a wonderful job the New Zealand government do. It is wonderful that they save our lives. I don't worry. I am well. I don't know the future. I am happy now.”

“Thank you for coming to my house and talking with me.”

Promote older migrants as an asset for Nelson in their support for children and grandchildren. Many of their children are skilled migrants in Nelson and raising well educated children to fulfil the future workforce for the region

Acknowledge the economic wealth and human capital that older migrants bring to Nelson

What we like

Nelson offers a great **lifestyle** with warm weather and so many activities for older people. In addition to the great outdoors there are many walking and cycling groups and other activities for older people. Newcomer Network and Nelson Newbies was a common way for people to connect and this was mentioned especially by those from European backgrounds. People who had connected with these groups felt very happy and supported by others who were also new to Nelson.

“Nelson seems to cater well for older people – there are lots of older people here and lots of activities for them. Until you get to know them better, some local Nelson people are not that friendly – many newcomers we talk to would like to meet people who have been living here longer.”

Celebrate the safe and healthy lifestyle that Nelson offers older migrants

How to promote more contact between older migrants and the more long term residents of Nelson

Newcomers often see **volunteering** as a way to contribute to their new community, as well as a way to meet new people. Five of the ten interviewees were involved in voluntary work and others were also helping to care for grandchildren. All the participants were living independently without any services provided by external agencies. Not one of the participants required care – all were contributing in some way through gardening to produce vegetables for the family, taking care of children while parents worked, formal volunteering with a wider range of agencies and organising activities for other older people. Several mentioned the importance of their churches or faith communities in bringing them together and providing ongoing connection and support from a wider network.

“Nelson is definitely a more “older friendly” community. It is easy to find

information and if you are mentally and physically well there is so much to do. I love cycling and I do lots of voluntary work and I’ve joined the Nelson Japanese group. I help to look after elderly people at Presbyterian Support, I have been involved with Citizens Advice Bureau and I help out at events with Sports Tasman. Both my husband and I are applying to be volunteers at Natureland.”

Acknowledge the contribution of older migrants as volunteers providing childcare and general support for younger families in Nelson

Nelson needs to engage older migrants as volunteers outside the home to provide more connection with the wider community. One way to do this would be to support Nelson Newcomers Network and Nelson Newbies

The health system is very good with supportive professionals. *“Here there is a good hospital and specialists but in Queenstown we had to drive four to six hours to get to a big hospital.”*

“In South Africa, I would have had to pay very expensive medical insurance and also there was no pension. Government hospitals are terrible there – people have to bring their own sheets and blankets and everything gets stolen from you anyway. I hear older people here complaining but I’ve only had a good experience. Although it does seem that in New Zealand people who get sick don’t get such good attention as someone who has an accident. I find it expensive to go to the doctor but I’m not sure if I’m entitled to any help with that.”

“We also worry about medical services being able to keep up with demand for elderly as more people move to Nelson.”

How to ensure health services meet the growing demand from an ageing population in Nelson and the ability to access that care.

“There is not the same feeling of aggressiveness. There was a lot of

racial tension in U.K. – we just hope that New Zealand doesn’t make the same mistakes. New Zealand should insist on a degree of integration and a good level of English for immigrants.”

Every interviewee mentioned **feeling safe** in Nelson. *“We feel much safer here. Although we don’t usually go into Nelson at night, we would feel okay to do that but would hesitate to go out at night in some areas in England. Young people are so much more polite here, they say hello and acknowledge us.”*

A challenge is to maintain good race relations in Nelson as the region becomes more diverse.

What we find difficult

Housing was mentioned as a challenge by almost all of the participants. Those renting were often living in cramped conditions with extended family or if they were in a position to buy, they found it difficult to find smaller houses which would give them the option to downsize from larger family homes. Many were surprised at what their money from selling a house overseas could buy in Nelson. *“The money selling a substantial property in France just paid for a section in Nelson. The cost of housing is incredible.”*

One couple had chosen to build a new home with features that they were more used to in Europe. Most found the Nelson housing **cold in winter**. This also applied to Housing New Zealand housing. *“The housing is British style, not insulated and single windows. New Zealanders seem to pretend there is no winter but the uninsulated houses here are so cold. I never felt cold in Sweden where the temperatures were so much lower. It seems here that you just have to “toughen up””*

One refugee family was living with extended family which had pooled finances to buy a beautiful new home. They were very excited about making this move, and really appreciated

having a warm house where several generations could live together and help each other out. Another refugee family had move three times in three years because their rental houses had been sold. The option of a housing unit for the older family member on the same property was also suggested as a good option.

Acknowledge the economic wealth and human capital that older migrants bring to Nelson. As well as bringing a certain amount of money to be able to emigrate to New Zealand, their support for their younger generations helps to retain the skills of the younger generation who have often moved here as skilled migrants.

Many mentioned their surprise at the **cost of living** in Nelson compared with their home countries. In many cases this was compounded by the exchange rate for the money they brought into New Zealand or their pensions from their countries of origin gave them less buying power in New Zealand. *“The cost of living here is very high. People need to bring plenty of money with them to be able to afford to live here. Local produce is good and affordable as is fresh fish but it’s expensive to eat out. It’s good that there is not the same tipping culture.”*

Many mentioned they would also like to meet more “long term” Nelson people, and they had found it difficult to come in contact with these people. While some had come to join other family members in Nelson, those who had come on their own felt quite disconnected, and were worried about how things would be as they grew older and were less able to look after themselves.

Provide activities and social connections for newcomers to Nelson, especially those from less “mainstream” countries of origin

“I also feel less flexible as I get older. I’m not used to doing things on my own. People with similar experience gravitate together. My friends are British, South African, German, Danish, Czech and Korean American. I would

love to have connection with locals. Kiwis have families around – it is hard when they get together for family events and we have no extended family.”

Some considered returning to their home countries although many would not qualify for a pension there now and such a move could bring other challenges.

“There are some worries about retirement in New Zealand but here I get a pension but not in Japan. Some Japanese friends are going back to Japan. One is alone and has no family here. She worries if she gets dementia and can only speak Japanese and will lose her English. The oldest memories stay.”

For those living on their own, either arriving on their own or losing a partner through death, to establish a supportive network to maintain independence and a feeling of belonging and wellbeing as they age



A word from Nelson Multicultural Council

This project has been a pleasure to be involved with. Our organisation now has a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities which were identified through this research. It is our hope that these will guide future work in the wider Nelson community to support this age group.

The celebrations are many; to continue to promote Nelson as a safe and healthy city in which to retire, to acknowledge and promote the older migrants and the contribution they make in many ways. Volunteering, child care, the wealth and human capital they bring to the community. To acknowledge the younger generation in the value they bring through the integration of their family and their love of Nelson.

In our opinion, the challenges to take forward include the need to advocate on behalf of our diverse and ageing population to ensure health services are mindful of this group and their access to care. To establish a supportive network for those living on their own, either arriving on their own or losing a partner through death, to maintain independence and a feeling of belonging and wellbeing as they age.

There is an opportunity to engage older migrants as volunteers outside the home to provide more connection with the wider community and promote more contact between older migrants and the more long term residents of Nelson.

And most importantly, as a whole community we must work to maintain good race relations in Nelson as the region becomes more and more ethnically diverse.



Ten Stories of Ethnic Diversity and Ageing in Nelson



Mila

Czech Republic



Mila was born in Czech Republic after Second World War and moved to Canada in 1968 with her family where she lived for fifteen years. She later moved to Saudi Arabia for six years and another five years in Abu Dhabi. After living in Sweden for sixteen years Mila moved to Nelson where she has lived for the last ten years. Her son and family also live in Nelson in the same street.

Mila is a bubbly, outgoing person but most of her friends are also migrants so there is little connection to the host community, even though she would be happy to meet more Kiwis and have more insight into Kiwi culture. Mila joined a choir soon after arriving here and really enjoys this.

Mila volunteered with Red Cross refugees and enjoyed this but over time found it too much of a commitment. This is the first time in her life that Mila has lived alone and she finds this a challenge but makes the effort to go out and meet people. She delivers library books to people who are unable to get to the library. She approached the library to offer her time to do this but no one got back to her. Then one day she went to a presentation by someone from the library and mentioned her interest in doing this. After that Nelson library were very happy to have her help. Mila also is interested in volunteering at St Johns Emergency room. This voluntary work makes her feel useful even though she does not get paid, and she also helps a friend at the market on Saturdays.

Mila feels she is very adaptable after living in so many different cultures and is very happy living in New

Zealand. Her friends in Europe are very envious of her being able to live in New Zealand. Mila is also happy to be able to be involved with her son's family including her grandson, aged nine, who has special needs. There are a significant number of young Czechs living in Nelson, many on working visas.

Mila did try joining Nelson Newcomers Network but there seemed to be more Asian and refugees involved. The challenge is to actually meet New Zealand born locals and over the ten years she is yet to make friends with someone from that group.

“Kiwis have a different sense of humour”.

“I do feel more accepted here than I did in Sweden – that seemed to be more of a monoculture. To be white is an advantage there. I felt most at home in Canada – everyone was an immigrant!”

“The housing is British style, not insulated and single windows. New Zealanders seem to pretend there is no winter but the uninsulated houses here are so cold. I never felt cold in Sweden where the temperatures were so much lower. It seems here that you just have to “toughen up”.

“One of the biggest worries for me is housing. It is very hard to find a small apartment that I can afford and is

easy to look after. Most housing like this is in retirement villages and that is not what I want. Prices compared with other countries are so high and they don't relate to incomes – especially when you are not earning. I am downsizing from this house and I don't know what is going to happen – where I will be able to find another place either to rent or buy... I just take it one day at a time...

As a country, I am so happy to live my old age in New Zealand and especially in Nelson. I feel very safe here when there are so many things happening out in the world. Kiwis should be

Karin and John

Germany
& Netherlands



John was born in The Netherlands. He came to New Zealand in 1961 and settled with his young family in Christchurch. Karin arrived in Christchurch from Germany in 2003. They met in a local walking group shortly after moved in together, got married and lived a happy life in the Garden City.

Most of their family, children and grandchildren, live in and around Christchurch. Karin has a son and grandchildren in Germany.

Because of the earthquakes and ongoing aftershocks they decided to leave Christchurch and moved to Nelson 5 years ago. First they looked at Blenheim but then fell in love with Nelson.

“Our lifestyle here is wonderful!”

“It is a very relaxed tempo and everything is on our doorstep. We have the beach, walkways and so much to

proud of their country – it is so beautiful and so separate from the rest of the world.

I also feel less flexible as I get older. I'm not used to doing things on my own. People with similar experience gravitate together. My friends are British, South African, German, Danish, Czech and Korean American. I would love to have connection with locals. Kiwis have families around – it is hard when they get together for family events and we have no extended family.”

do outdoors. We feel much safer than in Europe. We would never have had the chance to own our own home in Europe or have a beautiful garden. We love our house, the neighbourhood and have quickly made friends, mostly through Nelson Newcomers Network. We knew we had to get out and meet people and now we have more friends here than we ever had before in Christchurch”

When Karin and John first moved to Nelson they joined a group called “Shakers and Movers” - those people had moved from Christchurch as “earthquake refugees”. There was the feeling at the time that people in Nelson did not really understand what they had been through and how much they were affected by it. Being told to “just get over it” didn't help. The Shakers & Movers group

was very important at that time but has now disbanded as people have settled and moved on with their lives. Many from this group who arrived from Christchurch about the same time have merged into the Nelson Newcomers, an informal social group for new people from other countries and from around New Zealand. Last year the group separated from the Newcomers Network and runs now under “Nelson Newbies”, private and independent from any organisation.

The Newbies run regular events as a weekly coffee morning, walking groups twice a week, a once a month luncheon club, and a book club. Especially the walking groups are very popular with men and women. Numbers have grown so big that it has become harder to find a big enough café for a coffee after the walks. Nelson Newbies is a great way to meet people and to get to know the area but is also the way to find out local knowledge such as where to get what, recommend tradesmen, dentists, doctors, and the like. Many have been coming along to the group for over five years and they do a lot to support each other.

“It just takes phone call or text message to someone and they will help. People bring out their notebooks and swap phone numbers – it is great to see how new people make contact in no time.”

The group tends to attract an older age group. Most people are retired but they are nevertheless still very active. Some work part time, one person runs a B&B. A number of the group are involved in volunteering. To name a few, some help out at the hospice shop or other op-shops, one person is looking after families of patients in Emergency Department at the hospital, another one helps refugees to settle in, one is involved in teaching basic English, another one volunteers on the St John Shuttle, and others are involved in the Brook Sanctuary.

Sometimes younger people come along but they don't usually come back. They are looking for different activities and to check out the job market.

There also seems to be a need for young families to meet others for activities. We also are concerned about traffic along the beautiful waterfront. *“This is a real challenge for Nelson. After living in Christchurch and looking up at Rocks Road I would worry about what would happen in an earthquake. We also worry about medical services being able to keep up with demand for elderly as more people move to Nelson.”*

Nanai

Samoa



Nanai has spent forty six of his seventy years in New Zealand and moved to Nelson four years ago. *"I would like to be in Samoa but also like New Zealand. The last time I went back to Samoa was three years in the eighties but there are services here that are not available in Samoa. The culture has evolved a lot and subsequently is different from what I hold in my memory. I like to be free from cultural restrictions but then I also miss the security that culture offers."*

"I really enjoy where we are living. It is a different life experience from living in Auckland and a big step to marry Christine who is from Nelson. We were in the Wood in a very urban setting with neighbours. We enjoy nature, river and mountains – this all makes me feel good. Nelson is a small city. Services are not as good as in Auckland with limited options for services. That can be frustrating. It can be hard to get tradesmen so there is no real competition."

"The people here have different social attitudes and more accepting of multicultural groups. People are more friendly and there are not that many intolerable cultural tensions."

I first lived in Dunedin in 1970s and went to Otago University and there were some international students at Otago University providing ethnic diversity. Everyone was very friendly

and there were no real social problems. Auckland was the worst place in that respect. Central Nelson does not look so good. The places are too old and there is no vibrancy in the city. The town needs a facelift. Traffic is so good after Auckland but I worry how I would get around if I can no longer drive as there is no bus service around where we live."

"We have no close family here. Most are in Wellington and Auckland and Samoa. I was part of the Pacific Island Trust. There is not much funding provisions for cultural organisations servicing small communities like the Pacific Island Trust. Nelson City Council provides some funding. The local Pasifika Radio FM is funded by central government but there is not a good reception here. I think it would be good to have something like Fresh FM to give out information to the Pasifika community. There is a growing level of problems in that community with drug and alcohol and mental health issues and radio can deliver information in a way the community understands. Radio is a good way to reach Pasifika community. I used to work with radio in Auckland and people could ring talkback and discuss their problems and get information. Even to have two hours for two nights per week on Fresh FM would be very useful. It only costs about \$70 per hour but our community does not have that much money."

Most money goes into national initiatives but we need something local."

"There are more than 2,000 Samoans and Tongan in Nelson with all the Recognised Seasonal Workers from the islands as well. Pasifika people tend to not fill out the census which makes it difficult provide accurate statistics and to create a case of assistance. There was an Education Expo in 2016 at NMIT. It looked at education issues for the families and involved the parents as well. Often parents are not really involved so it was to encourage parents to participate more"

"It would be good for Pasifika community to be welcomed on to the local marae."

This would help to integrate the communities more. I think Nelson City Council could help with this. We have our own culture but it would be good to bring the communities closer together. Something like the Kai festival is really good."

"Age and health will dictate our future. We run a ministry here as a retreat. People come and stay for around three days. A lot of professional people come for time out from busy jobs. It is Christian based and involves counselling and praying. People come from Nelson, Kaikoura and West Coast and being here releases the tensions that they bring. Pasifika people don't really come as they don't deal with things in that way."

"I see Kiwis watch TV, then have too much beer. We help couples with problems and students who are suicidal. The normal life routine can be very stressful. The physical body is starting to suffer and then something like this can help them relax. Church ministry in itself can be very stressful."

"My wife is a retired nurse so we can do healing work with missionary work. I am also a retired counsellor and an interpreter for the Courts. We want life to be "less stressful" – we want to offer something special to Nelson."

"Although I have a disability I can still do most things. I have one hand missing so sometimes I need help to chop wood."

Eric & Jennifer

United Kingdom



Eric and Jennifer came to live in Nelson in June 2016 after four holidays in New Zealand. One son and grandson live in Nelson and their other son lives in Rarotonga with his wife and baby.

They had never experienced a New Zealand winter before but chose to come in June for the arrival of their new granddaughter. They knew a

couple of people before moving here but mainly younger friends of their son. Eric and Jennifer had lived seven years in France as well as living most of their lives in England so wanted to

get out and meet people and establish their own life here. *"It is much easier to be near the boys. Neither of us had any family in U.K. and we were missing our grandchildren growing up. But we don't want to be a burden to them. I don't want to be on their doorstep – I just want to be able to see them."* (Jennifer)

A lady at the company helping them with building their house in Nelson told them about Nelson Newcomers Network. Through Newcomers Network then soon after, Nelson Newbies, they met a lot of people who had moved up from Christchurch as well as people from Italy, Australia, Canada and South Africa. They joined the walking group and the coffee group that meets Wednesdays at Devilles. Both enjoy good health and enjoy an active, outdoors life in Nelson. *"Nelson seems to cater well for older people – there are lots of older people here and lots of activities for them. Until you get to know them better, some local Nelson people are not that friendly – many newcomers we talk to would like to meet people who have been living here longer"*.

Sometimes they find Nelson a bit parochial after living in Manchester with so many cinemas and activities available all the time. However, they did not have any family in England and realised that if something happened to one of them, the other would be very lonely. *"We feel much safer here. Although we don't usually go into Nelson at night, we would feel okay to do that but would hesitate go out at night in some areas in England. Young people are so much more polite here – they say hello and acknowledge us. There is not the same feeling of aggressiveness. There was a lot of racial tension in U.K. – we just hope that New Zealand doesn't make the same mistakes. New Zealand should insist on a degree of integration and a good level of English for immigrants."*

Access to medical services here has been very good but there has been a problem accessing some medicines which are readily available in the UK and sold over the counter without a prescription. They are not on the Pharmac list so have to be bought

on the internet and imported. *"It is a medication that is sold over the counter around Europe. We will get it on the internet and visitors coming from overseas will bring it for us but it would be easier if our Nelson doctor could prescribe it for us. We haven't taken out medical insurance yet – it's very expensive and most things seem to be covered by the health system here."*

"It is great that we can have direct contact with a specialist at the hospital if we need it."

"The money selling a substantial property in France just paid for a section in Nelson. The cost of housing is incredible."

"Older New Zealand housing is often poorly insulated - we are building an eco house with insulation above and beyond what is required in New Zealand. We will have solar power, grey water system and rain water retention. We like it that there is native bush around that has to be left as it is."

"The cost of living here is very high. People need to bring plenty of money with them to be able to afford to live here. Local produce is good and affordable as is fresh fish but it's expensive to eat out. It's good that there is not the same tipping culture."

"We're looking forward to building a new house and planting a garden. Also looking forward to spending time with the family that I have missed out on. I love to live near the sea, to swim in warm water. Also the fresh air, landscapes, trees and so much sunshine." (Jennifer)

"One suggestion would be to exterminate the sandfly!"

"Nelson is a clean place with no litter like there was in U.K. There are lots of places where dogs are prohibited. I don't agree with the liberal use of insecticides by NCC."

LaPer & Mu Su

Burma (Kayan)



LaPer aged 67 is Kayan and was interviewed with his granddaughter Mu Su, aged 20. LaPer came to Nelson eight years ago and Mu Su arrived here nine years ago. LaPer was born in Burma and went to Thailand in 1989 where he lived in refugee camps for nineteen years. Although LaPer attends English classes and is keen to learn, his English is still limited so this story is told through Mu Su.

"Life was very tough in Burma but it was easier in Thailand. Granddad and Grandma and five children lived in a one bedroom house in Burma. They did farm work growing rice and vegetables. Everything you want you have to pay for and the government wouldn't help. The army would come and grab the men to help carry stuff for them. They were frightening. They would say "just come for three days and we pay you" but the men never returned. My grandparents walked from Burma to Thailand for more than a week. They could only take two children each so my mum and her sister were left in Burma. Seven families travelled together carrying only a bag of rice, salt and chilli and eating whatever they could find in the jungle and forest. My aunty also had fever during the walk so was very weak."

"When they arrived in Thailand, the Kayan community helped and supported us. In the village, Kayan women were made to wear rings on their necks so the tourists would come and see them and pay to take photos of them. Granddad secretly went back for my uncle and aunty and my mum and dad came to Thailand two years later. One aunty is still left in Burma and two years ago I went to

Burma to see her as well as visiting Thailand. It was good that I speak Kayan."

LaPer is learning English at English Language Partners. He believes strongly in education and often would sit with Mu Su also learning with her when she was doing her homework.

Mu Su went to Victory primary, then to Nelson Intermediate and Nelson Girls College and is now studying at NMIT doing a Certificate in Information Technology. She will complete this in June and is keen to get a job then. *"I thought leaving school was easy but it is harder than I thought. I came to Nelson with no English, no friends and couldn't speak to anyone. It took three years to learn properly. In Intermediate, the other kids mocked us (refugee kids) and taunted us. But now I love this place – it is convenient. It is such an awesome place! A lot of my friends in Thailand have had babies already. But I think there are so many opportunities here."*

LaPer has a very active mind and is very motivated to learn. *"My life is much better here. God really helps me – I go to the Celebration Centre in Nelson where the pastor is a Kiwi. Getting connected with the church*

was very good for my life. Now I live differently and it is much better for the family - less trouble and no more drinking. Each year we go to Christchurch with the Church and meet with people from all round the world. Now we are not isolated and we are connected with people. Nelson is a nice place."

"My health is good. Since I left Thailand I have a shaky hand that is getting worse. I don't feel comfortable to eat in public. There is clean food and we have a lovely warm house. My nephew and his wife bought this house and I live here with my wife.

Midori

Japan

Midori has been living in New Zealand for twenty seven years and moved to Nelson from Queenstown three years ago. "It is a better retirement life here with good access to health services. Here there is good hospital and specialists, but in Queenstown we had to drive four to six hours to get to a big hospital. It is also much warmer here."

"Nelson is definitely a more "older friendly" community. It is easy to find information and if you are mentally and physically well there is so much to do. I love cycling and I do lots of voluntary work and I've joined the Nelson Japanese group. I help to look after elderly people at Presbyterian Support, I have been involved with Citizens Advice Bureau and I help out at events with Sports Tasman. Both my husband and I are applying to be volunteers at Natureland."

"I am happy to give my time but I also want to get involved to meet people. It works both ways. I need to get out and get involved in the

I do lots of biking and walking and go to volunteer at Brook community Gardens and I can bring vegetables home for the family." (LaPer)

"My Grandma wears the rings on her neck. She has been abused in the street and another Kayan lady was told to go back to her country. Now we know how to report these things to Nelson Multicultural Council." Mu Su is a great advocate for her community. "Nelson is a safe place compared with big cities. We are very happy here." (Mu Su)



community. I wasn't quite sure how to find out what is happening. I looked in the local newspapers. Even though I meet people it still takes some times to make friends. I heard about the Nelson Newbies. We don't have children and sometimes I do feel isolated. My husband is into cycling, tramping, sailing and volunteers and the Brook sanctuary. He is very, very happy!"

"We feel very safe here. I left Japan because I didn't like the way of people working long hours and commuting long distances."

"Maybe in Japan I would have my siblings and extended family while I

only have my husband here and he is a Kiwi. There are some worries for me about retirement in New Zealand but here I get a pension but not in Japan. Some Japanese friends are going back to Japan. One is alone and has no family here. She worries if she gets dementia and can only speak Japanese and will lose her English. The oldest memories stay. She has a sister and nieces in Japan so she will try it out until she is 65 then make up her mind whether to come back to New Zealand.

In Japan she can afford a standalone two storey townhouse with two bedrooms, dining, kitchen and river and mountain views and has shops nearby. She cannot afford that in New Zealand.

It is easy to have a healthy retirement in New Zealand and be involved in many things. I want to help and one day I will need to be helped. Maybe I will move to a retirement village. In Auckland recently I saw a retirement village with a restaurant,

church, hairdresser, computer room, swimming pool, café and library. It was on the waterfront and absolute luxury but I don't think there is anything like that in Nelson.

The cycle ways and walkways in Nelson are great. Some elderly people are still driving but they have trouble coping with roundabouts. I think traffic lights are safer. Also there is not much public transport.

There was more nightlife in Queenstown. Public transport here is limited and the international students I work with are often not able to play evening sports because of this. When I am walking around Nelson at night I feel nervous because there is no one around. It's not so exciting at night. The Japanese students find it boring socially.

I like it that Nelson is so multicultural. The refugee communities are very close and I enjoy working with a Bhutanese family."

Tha Tha

Myanmar – Chin State



Tha Tha came to Nelson eleven years ago from Burma and is part of the Chin community here which now totals around five hundred members with only around ten over the age of fifty. Tha Tha came to Nelson with her husband and four children and is now grandmother to six grandchildren. Many of the Chin community have elderly parents back in Myanmar.

"Nelson is good weather and it is not too big. I care for the grandchildren while the parents work. In Burma it was difficult to live there. We had to work hard on the farms and the

weather in the Chin State is cold. Government was not good. There was no democracy and it was military control. They would force us to work and do things we didn't want to do. Here there are good opportunities and the New Zealand government is very good and kind to us. Here there is a chance to have good income. In Burma I would have to work hard and would never see my grandchildren. It is good to live here with my husband, my daughter and son-in-law and the two grandchildren. My other son lives in Nelson and has three children and my son in Wellington has one child. My daughter is at Bible College in Auckland.

"In Burma, things are very tough. Although it is cold, the houses are made of bamboo, not solid at all. Chin State is particularly cold with frosts in the winter. Very similar to Nelson weather. Language is a real barrier for me. I find it very hard to express myself. This is a problem to get a job. I would need qualifications and do an interview in English. Talking to other people outside the family, shopping in public is difficult. But people are very friendly. I went to Adult English classes in 2007 at Victory for a year when I first came to Nelson"

"Victory School is very good for the Chin children. They learn English together. My granddaughter is doing very well there. There are a lot of community meetings there on special days and the Chin Women's group meets there too. I go to events like Christmas but not to any activities outside of the house on my own. Every Sunday we go to Chin Glory Evangelical church and I am vice Deaconess of the Church. I go out with the family as a group."

"We are very close now but if they are away they could be bad and follow the New Zealand culture. It is most important to me that they follow and respect the Chin culture but I wonder if my grandchildren will even speak Chin. Now my children speak English in the house and they don't speak Chin with the grandchildren."

"There are some things I worry about with New Zealand culture – there are some things that are not acceptable in our religion and culture. In New Zealand, young people can do what they want when they turn 18 years. They can leave the house but in Chin culture they do not leave the house until they are married. They must stay at home until the parents say they can leave. Young people must respect their elders. It is very different for young people just to go flatting – this has not happened yet."

In New Zealand we are not allowed to smack children. When kids are growing up in Burma a slap is okay. It is hard when the kids don't listen. We have to respect New Zealand law. That is fine for us but I worry that in the future kids won't listen to parents. No respect. What can parents do? We don't hit or beat the children but how will the children listen and grow. It makes me worried. For Chin community it is a problem. Our people talk about that. It is very important to attend Incredible Years parenting course. Our parents don't have education in parenting like NZ parents. Our Women's group wants to have a Parenting course. All the women at the Women's group want it. The Church Council meeting will discuss this and if it is passed there will be a course. The Kindergarten Association want to help us. It is not just about God. We have to grow society and the human side. Grow knowledge and our society. We need to grow our faith and we need to have knowledge of the government laws."

"My dream would be to go back to Burma to live. We are happy here but when we grow old we miss our relatives back there, the village where I grew up, the culture and the

"I don't worry for myself. I am getting older. I worry for the grandchildren that they will go the bad way and forget the Chin culture."

language. There's something missing for me."

"I really respect the NZ government and am so happy to have a safe life. We can become whatever we want to be. Eat what we want to eat. Drink what we want to drink. It is amazing.

It is wonderful job the NZ government do. It is wonderful that they save our lives. I don't worry. I am well. I don't know the future. I am happy now."

"Thank you for coming to my house and talking to me."

Goma & Pabitra

Nepal



Goma is 81 and was interviewed with her daughter-in-law Pabitra and her granddaughter aged one. Pabitra has been in Nelson for three years. Goma was in Christchurch for 6 years before moving to Nelson in 2016. Goma had been coming for holidays in Nelson from Christchurch where she lived with her other son and she decided she liked the sunshine in Nelson.

Before coming to New Zealand, Goma was in a refugee camp in Nepal. Her youngest daughter was in Christchurch, and she helped her brother and her mother to come to New Zealand. She sent money back to the family and said it was good in New Zealand. "We didn't even know where New Zealand was!" Many Bhutanese coming to New Zealand have family here already which makes it much easier, especially for the children."

"In Bhutan we had a very hard time. We had to do hard work with livestock and look after the land. There was a landslide in the village and all the houses were destroyed. I carried one child on my back and one on my front and holding the hand of another child. We were hiding under a cowshed. This saved their lives but the houses fell apart. Locals helped us but there was trouble with the government.

We had to go away. There was nothing for us".

Goma has nine children and some live in Canada, Bhutan, America and India as well as New Zealand. In the refugee camp in Nepal it was a very hard existence. "There were five kilograms of rice for fifteen days per person but this got less and less. We were not allowed to go to work. We had poor health facilities and needed money for operations but how do we earn money?" There was no transport to even get to the hospital. Although Pabitra graduated in Nepal and Bhutan the only work she had was in the fields.

Goma has much better health living in New Zealand than in Nepal especially noticing the good air quality here while there is a lot of air pollution in Nepal from charcoal fires. The big problem she does have is not speaking English so she can communicate with very few people. If she is not with the family, then she always needs an interpreter. She sees

a gap in communication between the older generation and the young kids. Her granddaughter does not speak any Nepalese and grandma doesn't speak English. There are around eighty Nepalese in Nelson. There is a Seniors' group that go for a trip every month with Red Cross Refugee Services. Goma really enjoys this and looks forward to the trips.

"Mainly the family is the interpreter but there are families where no one speaks English. Baby understands Nepalese but the older daughter said 'I don't like Nepalese.' She goes to a Nepalese class for two hours each Sunday. At least there she learns something. There is funding for the teachers to run the classes at Victory Community Centre."

"We enjoy living in this area, the food is good and there is no violence. We feel safe and people in Nelson are very friendly. In Christchurch, young people called out from their cars asking for money. This hasn't happened in Nelson. We have had to shift house three times in three years. We have a two bedroom house for three adults and two children and rent is going up all the time. The children are keen on watching television but the old people want their own language. Everyone likes different things. Goma helps with the children and gives them lots of love and affection. She can babysit for an hour or so. It is our duty to look after our parents – she chooses where she wants to go."

Pabitra would like to get a job. She hopes that her daughters will do better than us in terms of language – have less of an accent. "My daughters will be more like New Zealanders. I encourage them to do their own thing. They will have the language to talk to everyone. Maybe some Maori too. Opportunities will be great for them – a big career. Education is very important. There is much more technology here and a lot of learning materials. Learning in a refugee camp was different."

"My dream is to live with my family and to have peace and prosperity for the family."

Pabitra would like to get a professional job but "I would have to compete against all the Kiwis. It is so difficult to get a suitable job. They ask me if I have New Zealand work experience but I have to get a job to get that experience. I would like to work part time. Maybe as a bilingual teacher or a casual interpreter. My husband was on a benefit and we had help from Red Cross Refugee Services to find work through Workbridge."

Goma has had a sore leg since 2010 and has difficulty walking. After the earthquakes in Christchurch she spent some time in Auckland but then went back to Christchurch. "I can still walk to the supermarket in Victory."

Since getting married Goma has moved to eighteen different places before New Zealand. "If I was a young girl I would want to live in New Zealand. I didn't get to learn. They said if women learn they become a witch. Women have to do the housework and males dominate the family. There was no schooling for me. No literacy in my own language. The seniors group at Victory taught me to write my name and do a signature. There was no time for schooling in the refugee camp. I had to babysit children for young parents so they could work. I wish I could do more like read and write."

"Life is like water – it is flowing"

Celeste & Mindy

South Africa



Celeste and her husband came to Nelson from South Africa two years ago to join their daughter, Mindy, and her family. Mindy had emigrated from South Africa seven years ago to take up work as a paediatric physiotherapist. Mindy and family had found Nelson a very easy place to settle with lovely people at work and in the community who were very supportive of them. "We made good choices about where to live. Initially we rented from some lovely people who were so warm and welcoming and they have remained friends till this day. We came with two boys then aged nine and almost twelve. My parents visited eight times in five years and eventually decided to look at immigrating to New Zealand. I always hoped they would come to Nelson."

After living in Nelson for three years, Mindy was able to sponsor her parents.

They submitted an Expression of Interest with Immigration NZ. Six months later they were accepted at Tier one level which meant their subsequent application to move to NZ was fast tracked. Three months later they were accepted to come to Nelson. "We weren't really ready to come – it all happened so fast. I was still working as an auditor in South Africa. I tried to get a similar job here but age was against me. I could only get full time work - I found jobs on Trade Me, approached local shops and businesses and was successful in getting interviews but never actually found a suitable part time job. After I

while I lost interest as I got too busy enjoying myself!"

"I lived a lovely life in South Africa with a similar lifestyle but I just had to be on alert – there was so much crime. Violence, hijacking, home invasion, lots of shootings in malls, at traffic lights. It could happen anywhere. I was not aware how "on alert" I was until I came here and I could stop worrying about it. In Nelson, I feel very safe. I don't have to worry about setting burglar alarms. I love to go to bed at night and not worry."

Celeste recently celebrated her 70th birthday and has embraced the Nelson lifestyle keeping very busy with bowls, squash and the walking group she joined through Nelson Newbies. Her activities cross all age groups. With bowls including some older people, squash often means playing with people thirty years her junior. She has some really good friends through the Nelson Newbies group. "We really support each other because we have all moved from somewhere. I love my life here."

"In South Africa I would have had pay very expensive medical insurance and also there was no pension. Government hospitals are terrible there – people have to bring their own sheets and blankets and everything gets stolen from you anyway. I hear older people here complaining but I've only had a good experience. Although

it does seem that in NZ people who get sick don't get such good attention as someone who has an accident.

I find it expensive to go to the doctor but I'm not sure if I'm entitled to any help with that"

"When we arrived our plan was to go into a retirement village but the cost was prohibitive. Converting the rand to NZ currency meant everything was so expensive. For example, a cappuccino in South Africa would cost two dollars while in Nelson, it is five dollars and the exchange rate is ten to one. We have had to change our lifestyle but we are still happy to be here. When we first arrived, we were house-sitting and then we found a really nice place to rent."

Mindy loves to have her parents around. "It was difficult to have Christmas and birthdays without them."

"I don't need my parents but it is very nice to have them nearby. It's also nice to for the boys to have their grandparents around. I also want to be able to look after my parents when they get older and there was always the worry that they might get sick in South Africa and what would happen then. Now it is just nice but for the future I would feel guilty to be so far away. That was a big pull for me."
For Celeste it is lovely to have the grandsons around. *"When we lived in South Africa I used to look after the boys a lot so it is nice that they can*

come around after school or sport activities. It was a big decision to make the move while we were still young and energetic to get and meet people and settle. Before we came here we had never been out of South Africa for more than seven weeks. Then I moved at seventy! Nelson Newbies made it so easy. We're all in the same boat. South Africa was also settled by the British so schooling, culture, humour and so on is not so different here. I think it is like South Africa was around thirty years ago. My grandchildren are having a similar upbringing to what my children had in South Africa thirty years ago. Speaking English makes it so easy – some Kiwi slang and subtleties are a challenge".

Mindy is concerned about the water quality in some of the rivers and the cost for primary school children to do sports and activities out of school. In South Africa they would be included in the school day. *"There is so much for young people to do here with fantastic walkways and cycle ways, public pools, playgrounds, skate parks. I expect as the boys get older they might want to go overseas – Nelson can be a bit boring for their age group."*

Celeste also enjoys what's on offer in Nelson. *"There is so much in Nelson that you don't need to pay for. Beautiful walks, beaches, free concerts and lots of free activities. I'll be very happy to get citizenship and I look forward to qualify for superannuation in eight years. I hope I will stay in good health and I would love to see all of NZ. I have never heard a single person complain about coming to NZ".*

Rose and Bea

Philippines



Rose came to live in Nelson after she married her Kiwi husband in 1981. Since he died she has been living on her own in the family home. She recently celebrated her 85th birthday with all her family meeting in the Philippines. Her three children from Christchurch, and another one from Australia joined her other three children in the Philippines. There were also her fourteen grandchildren and her nine great grandchildren.

While Rose was in Philippines, she suffered with heat stroke and was admitted to hospital. Following on from this experience, her granddaughter, Bea, who is a trained Filipino nurse, gave up her job to come and live with Rose in Nelson for nine months and take care of her. *"I saw grandma when she came to Philippines for her birthday and when she was not well I did not want to think of her coming to New Zealand on her own."* Rose loves to have Bea here and is worrying about when she goes. There is also the chance that one of Bea's cousins might come when Bea returns to Philippines. Bea would be very keen to study in Nelson to get her New Zealand nursing qualifications, but this is all unclear at this stage.

In some ways, Rose would love to return to the Philippines. *"I don't know if I can just travel there any more. I would like to be buried in Philippines in my family garden tomb. What if my other family can't come to see me? On the other hand, I worry about terrorist attacks in Manila recently and feel much safer in Nelson. I see the police with guns at the airport in the Philippines and I'm not used to that. I was going to go to Philippines with Bea when she goes in November*

but I changed my mind because of the terrorist attacks. I worry about what will happen when Bea goes back home. Maybe one of her cousins will come. They would have to give up their jobs if they come. But if I am in Philippines, the family are too busy with study and work to look after me."

"When I went to hospital in Philippines, I was asked to pay a "professional fee". It was very expensive and on the last day the doctor didn't even see me. He just sent a message to say I was okay to go back to New Zealand." When Bea asked for the medical notes for Rose back in New Zealand, there was nothing recorded about her visit. "In New Zealand the medical care is so good and prescriptions are cheap. Next week I have an appointment to get a hearing aid.

In Nelson I am safe to go to the doctor in a taxi and I have taxi chits to pay for that.

I can call 111 if there is an emergency and the ambulance will take me to hospital and it is free. If I feel faint or collapse then I can go to the hospital. If you don't have money in Philippines then you can't go to hospital"

"I can speak well in English but sometimes I can't remember the exact words, or where things are. My mother

died when she was seventy four but she never forgot anything.”

“I like living in this house but there is the insurance and the rates to pay. Maybe my husband’s family will make me sell. Then I don’t know where I will live.”

Bea had been visiting the elderly in the Philippines as a community nurse does, and noticed that some in their sixties seem very old. *“Most of the elderly in the Philippines just stay at home and don’t do anything. I can compare to the elderly I have seen here in Nelson when I took grandma to the Positive Ageing Expo. That was really fun with lots of music and things going on. I have seen the elderly were having fun also. It might be okay for a vacation for her in Philippines but everyone is at school or work. No one has time to look after her. There is no room for a garden and everything is congested.”*

“Today I (Rose) went out in the taxi to get compost for my garden. I am going to plant my garlic so I can share it with my family in Christchurch. I also like to take send them lemons from my garden. I used to go to Christchurch a lot when I was younger.”

