

Mentoring and Career Support for Syrian and Iraqi Refugee Doctors

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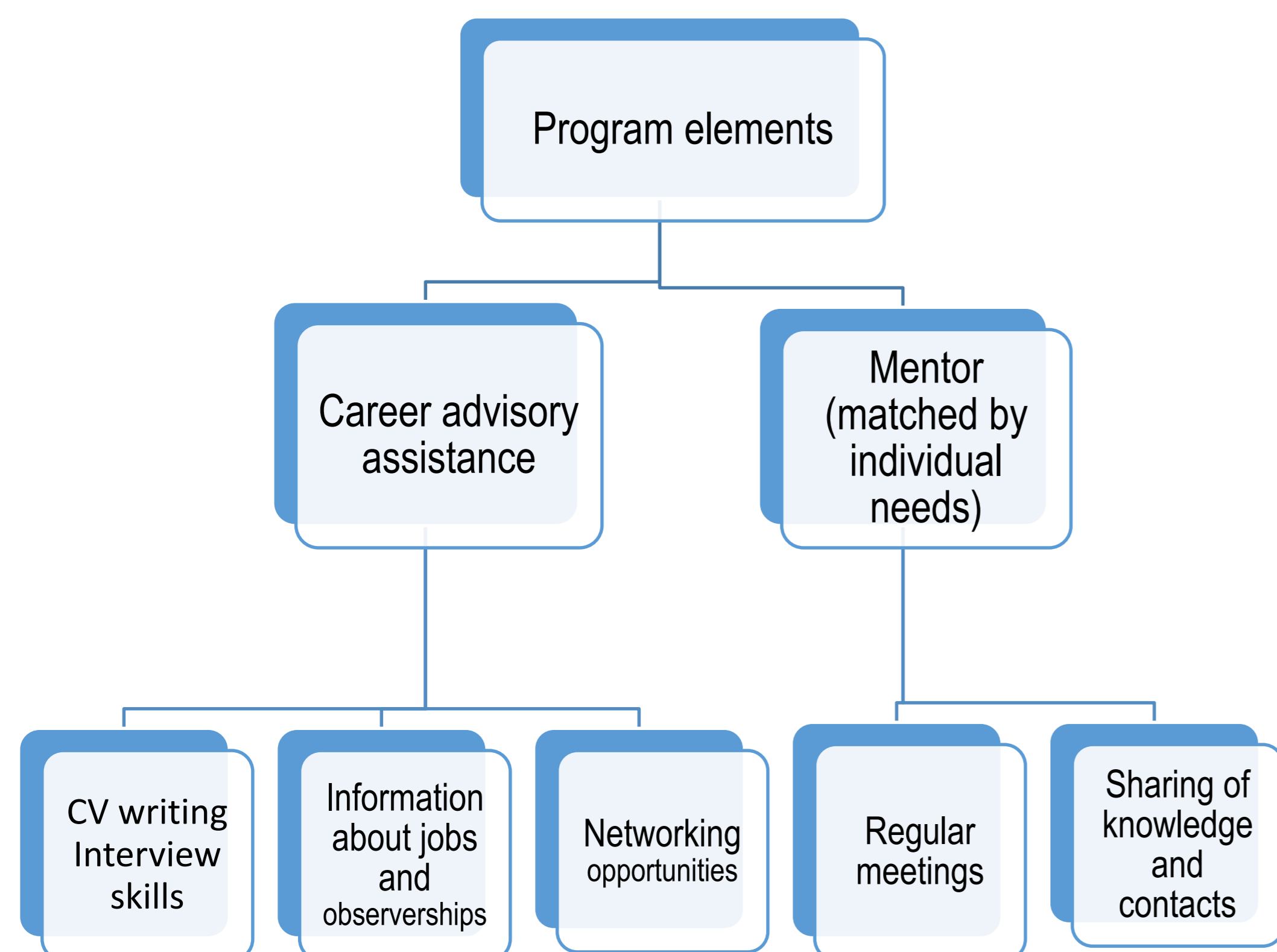


INTRODUCTION

- In 2018 AMA Victoria was approached by the Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES) Australia for assistance in preparing some Syrian and Iraqi Refugee Doctors for the Australian medical workforce
- The 6 refugee doctors, (3 male and 3 female) who took up the offer ranged in experience from an early career doctor having completed the equivalent of an intern year to a surgeon with many years of experience, but 5 out of 6 had practised medicine for less than 10 years. All had experienced dislocation from their country due to war and had entered Australia on humanitarian grounds as refugees. Several had practised medicine in war zones and refugee camps
- At the time of joining AMA (Vic) the refugee doctors were in the process of completing their International English Language Testing System (IELTS) course and preparing for the clinical exams set by the Australian Medical Council. No members of the group were planning to use the Specialist Pathway to registration. All were keen to restart their medical careers in Australia as soon as possible

METHODS

- AMES had specific funding through the Career Pathways Pilot, a one-year federally funded initiative. This enabled doctors to join AMA (Vic) as associate members. Membership provided access to resources such as the mentoring program and career guidance



'Mentoring is to support and encourage people to manage their own learning in order that they may maximise their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance and become the person they want to be.'

Working definition of mentoring from Eric Parsloe, one of the founders of the European Mentoring and Coaching Council and founder of the Oxford School of Coaching and Mentoring. (E. Parsloe, Coaching, Mentoring and Assessing: A Practical Guide to Developing Competence (London, 1995))

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

- At this time
 - 4 refugee doctors have had observerships
 - 2 have passed AMC clinical exam, 2 have to re-sit & 2 are preparing to sit exam for the first time
 - 3 have secured employment as HMOs.
- Participants were most interested in assistance with finding employment. Hence initial focus was on access to careers advice, CV preparation, interview skills and employment seeking strategies
- However, there is a variation in hospitals expectations regarding passing the AMC clinical exam. Some will not consider applications unless the doctor has passed the exam and others are more flexible
- Networking & having a medical colleague who can introduce you to the medical workforce unit opens opportunities to observerships which may lead to employment. However employment seems to depend on unfilled vacancies at hospitals
- A formal survey was not undertaken but AMA Vic received positive feedback from all mentees and mentors

CONCLUSION

This was a small pilot program with only a single year of funding. While both mentors and mentees provided positive feedback (and relationships are ongoing), there are mixed results with respect to accessing employment.



Jurstine (mentor) and Marwa (mentee)