January 2026

CONDITIONS FOR GOOD SOCIAL OUTCOMES

What factors facilitate or impede migrants' psychological wellbeing and sociocultural adaptation?

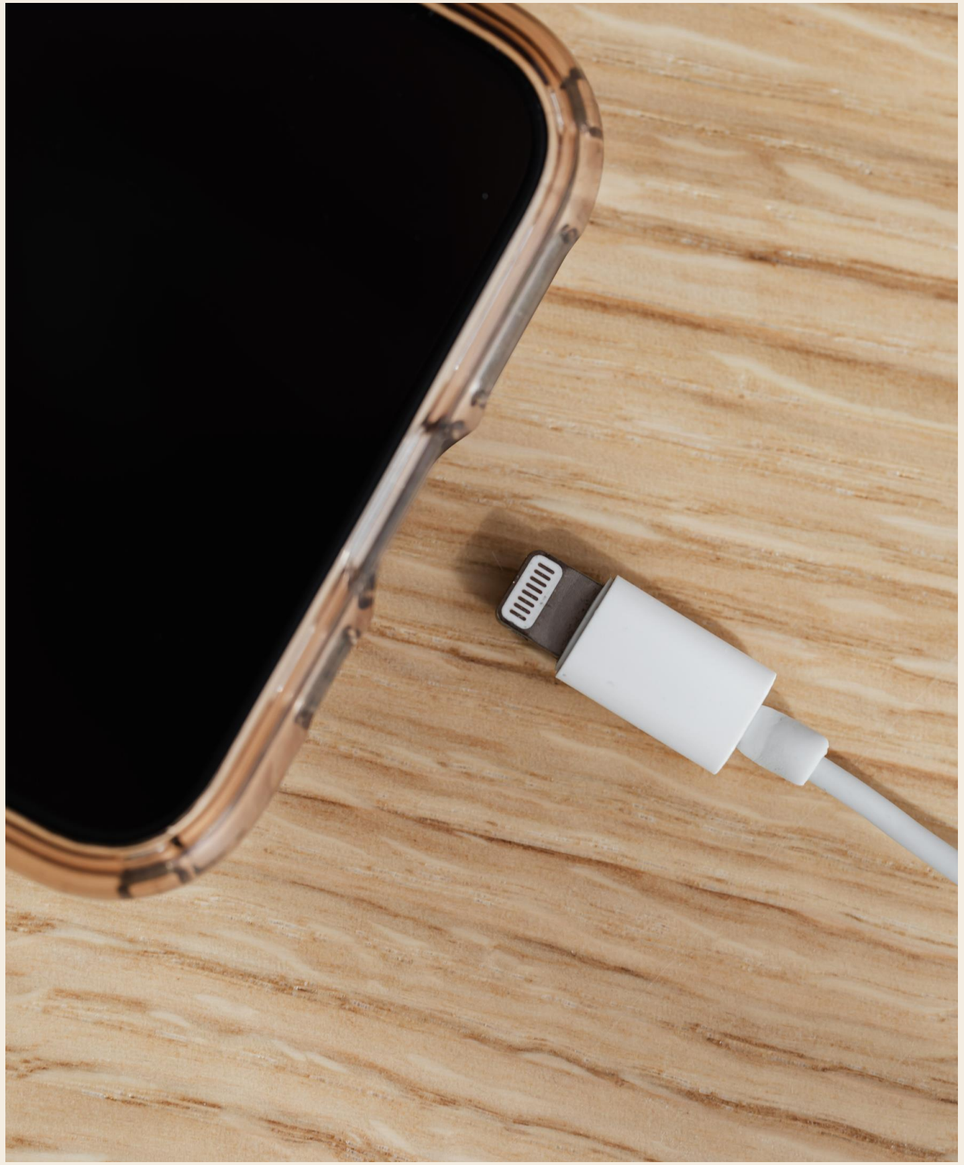
Dr Maja Krtalić, Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington

AN **INFORMATION LENS** ON WELLBEING AND ADAPTATION

- Adaptation is an **information-intensive process**: migrants constantly acquire, evaluate, translate, and apply information in unfamiliar systems
- Wellbeing struggles often reflect wider **information system failures**, not individual shortcomings

INFORMATION ENVIRONMENTS

- Migration as a transition
- Fractured information landscapes
- Information actors and mediators



SUPPORTING AND IMPEDING FACTORS

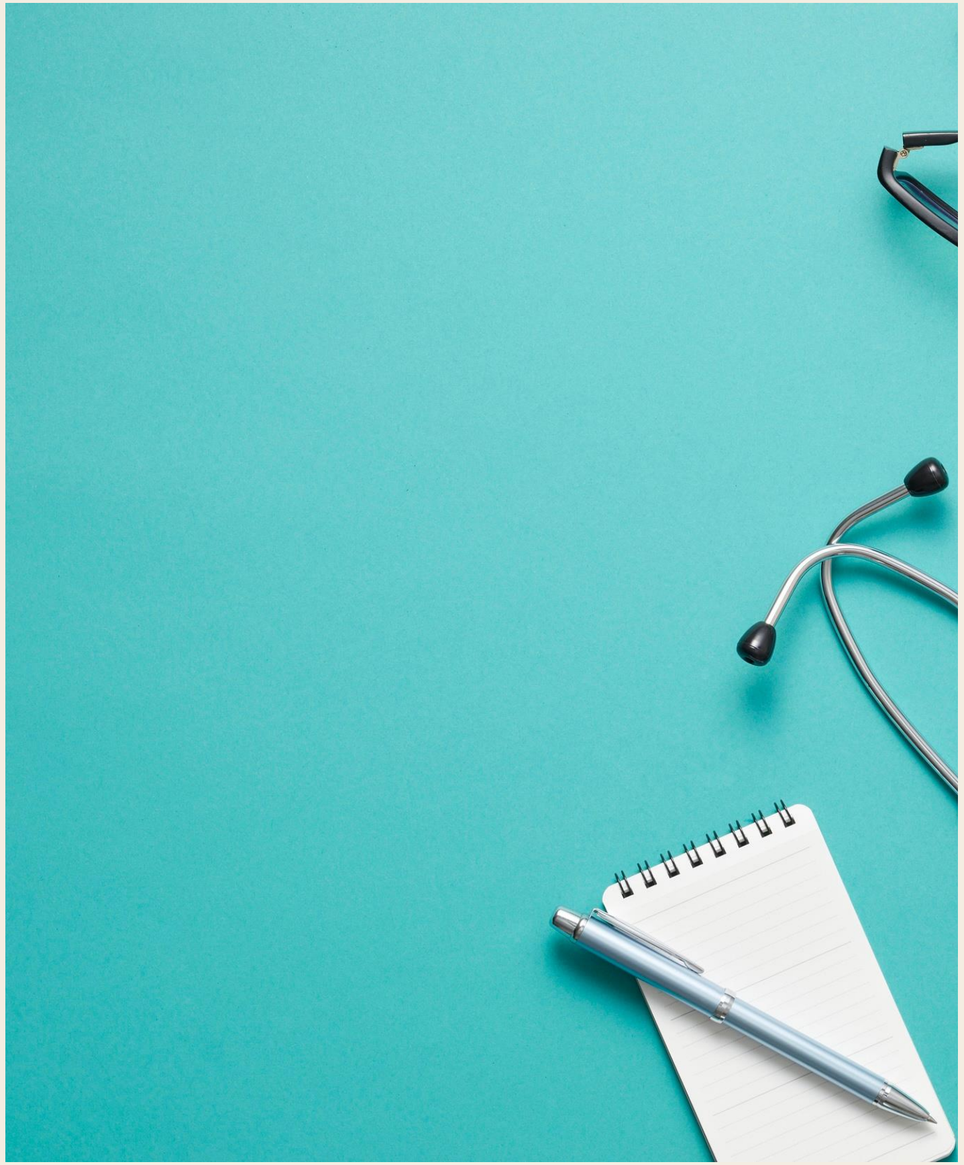
Accessible and trustworthy information ecosystems	Information overload and complexity
Information literacy and digital inclusion	Data invisibility and misclassification
Informal information networks and social ties	Language and cultural translation gaps
Responsive and coherent public information	Fragmented and inconsistent information

ACCESSING HEALTHCARE

A migrant is eligible for a GP but cannot clearly establish this at enrolment.

--Delayed care, confusion about rights, and reduced trust in the system

--Health access depends on institutional navigational knowledge, not just eligibility.

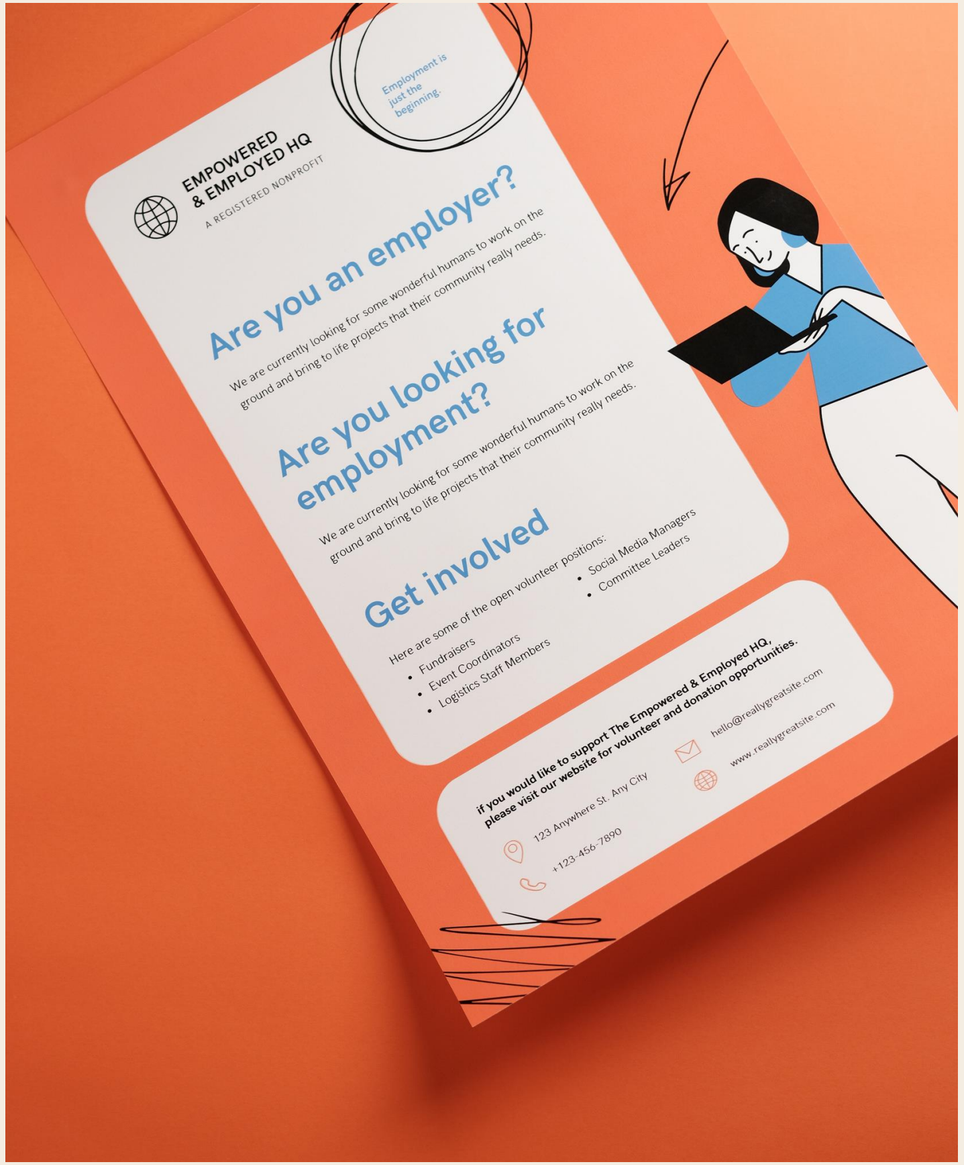


QUALIFICATIONS AND IDENTITY

A skilled migrant waits for qualification recognition with unclear employment pathways.

--Underemployment and loss of professional identity

--Information and classification systems shape dignity, not just labour outcomes.



VISA UNCERTAINTY

A temporary migrant tracks frequent visa policy changes across official websites and community forums.

--Conflicting information, constant monitoring, and ongoing anxiety

--Psychological stress is driven by information instability, not a lack of resilience.



DIGITAL-FIRST SERVICES

A migrant completes high-stakes online forms with limited guidance or reassurance.

--Fear of mistakes and reliance on unofficial advice

--Digital efficiency can unintentionally increase psychological risk.



LIBRARIES AND SETTLEMENT

A migrant in a regional town relies on library staff for help navigating services.

--Confidence, connection, and gradual sociocultural adaptation

--Information professionals support wellbeing and inclusion.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Policies and services as information environments

Designing for navigability, not compliance

Collaboration with information intermediaries

Building feedback and learning loops

Using lived experiences to improve systems

Improving information governance

maja.krtalic@vuw.ac.nz

Thank You

Where do our systems unintentionally create stress or exclusion?

Whose (information) needs are we not seeing?

How can we work together to improve wellbeing and adaptation outcomes?