



Practical Guide



INVOLVING VOLUNTEERS FROM DIVERSE CULTURAL AND LANGUAGE BACKGROUNDS IN YOUR ORGANISATION

Strategies and tips for not-for-profits and managers of volunteers about recruiting and involving volunteers from culturally diverse backgrounds



Australian Multicultural Foundation



volunteeringaustralia

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Volunteering Australia
Level 3, 11 Queens Rd, Melbourne, Victoria 3004
T: 03 9820 4100 F: 03 9820 1206
E: volaus@volunteeringaustralia.org
W: www.volunteeringaustralia.org

Case study interviews by Moya Sayer-Jones

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WHAT THIS GUIDE CONTAINS

The Practical Guide to Involving Volunteers from Diverse Cultural and Language (CALD) Backgrounds provides useful background information on volunteers from diverse backgrounds and practical strategies to help organisations recruit and retain them. The Guide contains 3 modules covering context, recruitment and best practice, and 2 modules which focus on recruiting women and young Muslims as volunteers.

➤ **Module 1 – The facts**

- Why involve volunteers from diverse cultural backgrounds?
- Diversity: a snapshot
- Understanding diversity
- What do we know about volunteers from diverse cultural backgrounds?

➤ **Module 2 – Recruitment – a planned approach**

- Planning
- Research
- Building a relationship with CALD communities
- The recruitment campaign

➤ **Module 3 – Recruiting women from diverse cultural backgrounds into your volunteer program**

- Why involve women from CALD communities in your volunteer program?
- Women and volunteering
- Recruiting women from CALD communities
- 10 quick tips for involving women from CALD backgrounds

➤ **Module 4 – Recruiting young Muslims into your volunteer program**

- The case for involving young Muslims in your volunteer program
- What our research found
- Reaching young Muslims
- Learning more about Australia's Muslim communities

➤ **Module 5 – Best practice strategies**

- Communicating across language barriers
- Supporting your volunteers from diverse backgrounds with best practice in line with the National Volunteering Standards
- Scenarios –What should you do?
- Some case studies



module 1

The facts about volunteering and cultural and linguistic diversity

This Module brings statistics about diversity and volunteering together with research findings to look at the volunteering context for people from a range of cultural backgrounds.

WHY INVOLVE VOLUNTEERS FROM DIVERSE CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS?

The facts

Australia's population is becoming increasingly diverse. Since 1945, Australia has welcomed more than six million migrants, and of our 20 million residents, 43% were either born overseas or had at least one parent born overseas. Over 200 languages are spoken, with the most common being English, Italian, Greek, Cantonese, Arabic, Vietnamese and Mandarin.

Around 6.3 million Australians over the age of 18 volunteer, which equates to around 35% of the total population. A National Survey of culturally diverse volunteers in 2004–2005 shows that while the rate of formal volunteering in mainstream not-for-profits by people of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds is lower than this, at around 23%, 56% of volunteers of CALD background volunteer in both their own communities AND the broader community.

Clearly, people of diverse cultural and language backgrounds are willing to be involved in the volunteer forces of not-for-profit organisations but are under-represented there. As a result, the not-for-profit sector may not be reaping the benefits Australia's diversity has to offer.



The benefits

The co-ordinators/managers of volunteers who responded to the National Survey identified the following benefits of involving volunteers from diverse cultural backgrounds:

- these volunteers bring potentially useful knowledge of specific cultures;
- they connect the mainstream organisation with their home communities;
- they speak (and may write in) one or more languages besides English;
- they increase the cultural sensitivity of the organisation's service provision;
- they bring new perspectives to the organisation;
- they bring new and varied life experiences which add to staff and other volunteers' knowledge;
- their involvement promotes mutual respect and understanding/tolerance and works against racism and ignorance in the community; and
- their involvement increases their own understanding of mainstream Australian society, which is also of benefit to the wider community.¹

A recent Canadian study² found that involving young people from culturally diverse backgrounds as volunteers would benefit organisations in the following four ways:

- improvement of organisational and staff cultural competence;
- increased support from diverse communities;
- enrichment of the organisation's programs; and
- a pool of qualified candidates for future staff positions.

A UK study in 1997³ identified a broader range of benefits – to individuals, organisations and the community – from working with volunteers from a range of cultural and language backgrounds, including:

- empowerment of individuals;
- skills sharing, both within and outside the organisation;
- mentoring/sharing life experiences;
- informing and educating others;
- advocacy;
- (introducing or strengthening) anti-discriminatory practices;
- identity retention;
- networking.

¹ Australian Multicultural Foundation and Volunteering Australia 2007, *National Survey of Australian Volunteers from Diverse Cultural and Linguistic Backgrounds*, Melbourne: Volunteering Australia. Referred to throughout as 'the National Survey'.

² Calgary Immigrant Aid Society 2005, *Culturally Diverse Youth and Volunteerism*, Ottawa: Volunteer Canada.

³ National Centre for Volunteering 1997, *My Time, My Community, Myself*, London: National Centre for Volunteering.

If you want to increase the involvement in your organisation of people from a range of cultural and language backgrounds, you will get the best results by taking an informed, planned and strategic approach.

In summary, recruiting people from diverse cultural and language backgrounds as volunteers makes your organisation more representative of Australian society as a whole, and this translates into some specific benefits:

- A broader understanding in your organisation of the needs and views of the wider community
- A better understanding in culturally diverse communities of your organisation, what it stands for and what it does
- Improved capacity to achieve your objectives across the whole community
- Access to a wider range of skills and experience
- Improved capacity to deliver your services to local communities or individuals of particular cultural or language backgrounds
- Opening up new sources of potential volunteers, and making your organisation more sustainable in the long term, particularly at the local level.

'We don't think of our volunteers as culturally and linguistically diverse. I mean, obviously they are, but we just think that this is a place where people happen to come from many different backgrounds.' *Jane Humphrys, Manager, Volunteer Program, Museum Victoria*

It's easier than you think

If you want to increase the involvement in your organisation of people from a range of cultural and language backgrounds, you will get the best results by taking an informed, planned and strategic approach. Some of that planning and strategy needs to be aimed at decision makers and those who shape opinion and policy within your organisation. There are some key messages you need to drive home in your organisation, and three key actions you need to do first.

The key messages

People from a wide range of cultural and language backgrounds

- are **available and want to volunteer** with mainstream not-for-profits,
- **bring extra value** to your organisation,
- are **not as difficult to recruit and involve** as you think, and
- may **need support** as volunteers.

For **Action 1**, look at **Module 1, The Facts** and **Module 2, Recruitment**.

For **Action 2**, look at **Module 5, Best Practice Strategies**

For **Action 3**, look at **Module 2, Recruitment** and **Module 5, Best Practice Strategies**

Three things to do first

Action 1: Find out about your local community

The settlement patterns of incoming groups have meant that the language and cultural mix in Australian cities and larger regional centres varies enormously from suburb to suburb and town to town. Plus, there are basic and important cultural as well as language differences between immigrant communities. This means that a recruitment strategy based on a one-size-fits-all approach to communities that are culturally and linguistically diverse is less likely to be effective than one based on knowledge and experience of the particular communities that your organisation comes into contact with or serves at the local level.

Action 2: Make sure your workplace and organisation can support volunteers of all cultural backgrounds

Each person who volunteers is a resource for tomorrow as well as one for today. You will be more likely to recruit and hold on to volunteers drawn from diverse cultural backgrounds if you:

- address problems with language and cultural knowledge that might make it hard for them to do a good job;
- respect their culturally based needs in the workplace;
- ensure that racism, stereotyping and discrimination have no place in your workplace culture;
- make sure that volunteering delivers what they are looking for (e.g. meeting new people, acquiring new skills, helping others within their own community, improving their English, learning more about Australian society etc.); and
- recognise and reward volunteer effort in ways that are culturally acceptable and meaningful to the volunteer.

Action 3: Plan ahead and secure management support

To be effective, your efforts to recruit and retain volunteers from diverse cultural and language backgrounds may also need:

- extra or specifically allocated resources,
- variation to selection and induction processes,
- changes to policies and/or position documentation,
- changes to operating procedures, or introduction of some new procedures, and
- specific additional training for current volunteers as well as new recruits.

Each of these requires management approval and active support by management during implementation. To obtain this management buy-in, you will need to persuade your board and managers of the benefits of recruiting volunteers from a range of cultural backgrounds, and then present them with a recruitment strategy and a plan for how you will implement it.

Just how diverse are we?

DIVERSITY: A SNAPSHOT

National census and immigration data show that the cultural and linguistic mix in Australia is constantly evolving.

Nationally

10 LOTE [†] spoken at home by largest numbers in 2001	10 LOTE [†] spoken at home by fewer than 100 people* in 2001	10 fastest growing language groups in 1996–2001
by over 350,000 Italian	Acholi (from Uganda & Sudan)	Shona
by over 250,000 Greek	Aromunian	Norwegian
by 150-250,000 Cantonese	Basque	Afrikaans
Arabic	Breton	Papuan languages
Vietnamese	Karelian	Somali
by 50-150,000 Mandarin	Lapp	Oromo
Spanish	Galician	Sindhi
Tagalog	Ladino	Kurdish
German	Letzburgerish	Nepali
Macedonian	Faroese	Telegu
	<i>*excl Indigenous languages</i>	

† Languages other than English

OS birthplaces of 10 fastest growing groups from 1996–2001	10 countries of highest migration to Australia in 2004–2005 (excl UK and NZ)
Botswana	China
Oman	India
Kazakhstan	Sudan
Sierra Leone	South Africa
Sudan	Philippines
Georgia	Singapore
Afghanistan	Malaysia
Somalia	Vietnam
Nepal	Sri Lanka
Bangladesh	Iraq

Sources: ABS Census of Population and Housing in 2001 and the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) ⁴

⁴ Settler Arrivals: Selected Countries of Birth by Immigration Stream, Financial Year 2004-2005 accessed at <http://www.immi.gov.au> > Search > Statistics



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New and emerging communities

A 'new and emerging community' is any ethnic community that has experienced a significant percentage increase in the number of people arriving in Australia in the past 15 years. Emerging communities at present include people from many African and Pacific countries (e.g. Ethiopia, Somalia, Ghana, Tonga, Tuvalu) and from republics within the former USSR (e.g. Uzbekistan, Belarus, Azerbaijan). These communities are relatively small and may experience high levels of unemployment; English-language barriers; low-income status; or other social factors that could be defined as special needs.

Locally

The statistics below derived from the 2001 Census show how diversity varies across states and how culturally distinctive regional and suburban Australian communities can be. (Note that these figures exclude the United Kingdom and New Zealand, which are the overall leading birthplaces for Australians born overseas.)

In New South Wales, 23% of people were born overseas...

- In the municipality of Strathfield in Sydney, 48% were born overseas, with South Korea, China and Sri Lanka the leading birthplaces, and Cantonese, Tamil and Korean the LOTEs most spoken at home.
- In Wollongong, regional NSW, Macedonia, Italy, Germany, Yugoslavia and the Netherlands are the top overseas birthplaces, and Macedonian, Greek, Italian, Chinese languages and Spanish are the LOTEs most spoken at home.

In Victoria, 23% of people were born overseas...

- In the municipality of Casey in Melbourne, 28.7% of people were born overseas, and Sri Lanka, India, Italy and Mauritius are the leading birthplaces, while the LOTEs most spoken at home are Italian, Spanish, Sinhalese, Greek and Arabic.
- In Geelong, regional Victoria, 16.9% of people were born overseas and the leading overseas birthplaces are Italy, Croatia and the Netherlands and the LOTEs most spoken at home are Italian, German, Dutch and Croatian.

In Queensland, 17% of people were born overseas...

- In Logan City, Brisbane, 24.9% of people were born overseas, and the Philippines, Germany, South Africa, the Netherlands and Fiji are the leading birthplaces, while the LOTEs most spoken at home are Samoan, Chinese, Spanish, Khmer and Tagalog (Filipino).
- In Mt Isa and the surrounding region, 11.9% of the population were born overseas, most commonly in the Philippines, Germany, the Netherlands and Italy, and the LOTEs most commonly spoken at home are Tagalog, Italian, German and Spanish.

In Western Australia, 27% of people were born overseas...

- In inner city Perth, 35% of people were born overseas and the leading overseas birthplaces are Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, while the LOTEs most commonly spoken at home are Cantonese, Mandarin and Indonesian.
- In Bayswater, outside Perth, 35.5% of people were born overseas and the leading overseas birthplaces are Italy, Vietnam and India, and the LOTEs most commonly spoken at home are Italian, Vietnamese and Cantonese.

People who share a language do not necessarily share a culture or religion. People born in the same country or region do not necessarily have the same first language.

In South Australia, 21% of people were born overseas...

- In Campbelltown, Adelaide, the leading overseas birthplaces are Italy, Greece, Germany, Malaysia and China.
- In Whyalla in regional South Australia, the leading overseas birthplaces are Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Croatia and the Philippines.

In the ACT, 21% of people were born overseas...

- The leading overseas birthplaces of people in the ACT are Germany, Italy, Vietnam, China and India.

In the Northern Territory 14% of people were born overseas...

- The leading overseas birthplaces for Territorians are the Philippines, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, and the Netherlands.
- Eight of the top 10 LOTEs spoken at home are Indigenous languages; the other two are Greek and Chinese.

In Tasmania, 10% of people were born overseas...

- The LOTEs most commonly spoken at home in Tasmania are Italian, German and Chinese languages.

UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING DIVERSITY

Australians from diverse cultural and language backgrounds do not form a single 'CALD community', but many communities.

In getting to know particular communities within Australian society and individuals from diverse cultural and language backgrounds, it is important to recognise that language, culture and religion interact in different ways:

- **People who share a language do not necessarily share a culture or religion.** Think of the many culturally different places in the world where, for example, English is the main language, or Spanish.
- **People born in the same country or region do not necessarily have the same first language.** India, China, and the countries of Africa encompass huge cultural and linguistic diversity, but even small European countries (for example, Belgium, Switzerland or Finland) can be home to different non-immigrant language communities.
- **Religion is not bounded by culture or language.** Not all followers of one religion have the same culture. There are important cultural and language differences between, for example, a Polish Catholic and a Filipino Catholic, or a Sudanese Muslim and a Malaysian Muslim, or a Buddhist from Sri Lanka and one from Korea.

If you are managing a volunteer program involving culturally diverse volunteers, be sensitive to how different customs and cultural norms can shape attitudes and behaviour.

Being aware of the impact of culture

What do we mean by 'culture'?

Culture is...

...that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by [a human] as a member of society (UNESCO website/Macmillan Dictionary of Anthropology, Seymour-Smith, 1986)

...the sum total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings, which is transmitted from one generation to another (Macquarie Dictionary)

Cultural differences can be seen not just in our material lifestyles and in how we express ourselves artistically, but in what we think and believe; in the activities and learning we value; in how we speak and behave; and in how we treat each other and expect others to treat us.

If you are managing a volunteer program involving culturally diverse volunteers, you need to be aware of and sensitive to the ways different customs and cultural norms can shape attitudes and behaviour, so that you can work with them and manage their impact in the workplace. Here are some examples:

Communication

The informal Australian style of calling people by their first names will appear disrespectful to some, so finding out how people prefer to be addressed is important. Office or tea room chat can involve discussing home life, partners and family members, but to some people this could seem improper, or even threateningly intrusive (e.g. to those who have come as refugees from oppressive regimes) and they will not want to join in.

Some cultures value politeness over frankness, which has implications for feedback and discussing problems. Or outspokenness and combativeness in debate may be valued, and this can be experienced by others as rudeness, affecting how well people get on. Some are willing to give their opinions but only when asked. Some cultures value silence as much as speech, and when people do speak they may expect it to be given more weight than in cultures where people talk a great deal.

Social interaction

The conventions and manners governing social interactions differ across cultures. Older people may expect younger people to defer to them or show them more respect, and women may be expected to defer to men. This can create problems with, for example, younger people supervising older volunteers, or women supervising male volunteers.

Whether it is acceptable to touch another person, stand close, stare, or hold a person's gaze while speaking can vary between cultures. So can the acceptability of various physical habits like coughing, or blowing one's nose. While on one level these are trivial, they are also the most basic and visible forms cultural difference can take. These can be the things that give rise to tension or conflict and so often need to be covered in cultural awareness training.

Religious and moral attitudes

Religious restrictions, observances and taboos can affect how people dress, when they are available to volunteer, and what they can eat at social gatherings. It is also important to be aware that casual swearing, jokes about certain topics, or certain kinds of display material may also offend particular belief or value systems.

Recent research

The Australian Multicultural Foundation and Volunteering Australia have jointly undertaken or commissioned several pieces of research into volunteering by Australian from diverse cultural backgrounds. They include a **National Survey** of volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations in 2004–2005, a focus group-based **investigation of volunteering by young Muslims**, and a **literature review of the research into volunteering by Muslims, especially young people**.

These reports are all available for download in PDF format from the Research section of the Volunteering Australia website at www.volunteeringaustralia.org

Consultation and decision making

Your staff consultation and the way decisions are made in the organisation may not be readily understood by people from some cultural backgrounds. For example, those with high respect for authority and hierarchy may be reluctant to have any input and expect you just to make decisions and give directions; others from collectivist cultures may be uncomfortable giving their personal views in isolation and may prefer to participate in more organised group discussions aimed at building consensus.

What's 'different' about Australian culture?

Lots of Australians see their way of life as just 'normal' and that 'culture' is something only other people have. Here are some specific aspects of Australian culture that new arrivals to Australia can be surprised, puzzled or shocked by:

- the obsession with sport
- the fact that people may not live near, socialise with or even stay in very close touch with other members of their immediate family
- the fact that many Australians, of Anglo-Celtic background for example, seem to have no religion, do not regularly attend religious services, and often do not celebrate religious festivals like Christmas and Easter in a religious way
- being asked to a function and then being expected to contribute the food and even equipment ('bring a plate')
- being expected to get actively involved in children's schooling, rather than leaving it to the experts
- having complete strangers ask 'How are you today?' during a transaction (e.g. at the bank or supermarket check-out).

Try exploring some of the ways in which Australians are 'different' from other cultures during cross-cultural awareness training with your paid and volunteer staff.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT VOLUNTEERS FROM DIVERSE CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS?

Many people in culturally and linguistically diverse communities actively participate in volunteering activities.^{5, 6} While many 'help out' within their own community, volunteering in organisations with no ethnic or multicultural focus is also common. Importantly, most individuals responding to the National Survey in 2004–05 expressed a willingness to volunteer in mainstream organisations, given appropriate opportunities and support.

⁵ Australian Multicultural Foundation & Volunteering Australia 2007, *National Survey of Australian Volunteers from Diverse Cultural and Linguistic Backgrounds*, Melbourne: Volunteering Australia

⁶ Kerr, L., Savelsberg, H., Sparrow, S. & Tedmanson, D. 2001, *Experiences and perceptions of volunteering in Indigenous and non-English speaking background communities*. Adelaide: Social Policy Research Group, University of South Australia.

The National Survey showed that the concept of volunteering, and the motivations and barriers to volunteering, can vary from community to community.

The National Survey showed that the concept of volunteering, and the motivations and barriers to volunteering, can vary from community to community. This means that when you are planning a strategy to recruit volunteers of CALD background, you need to find out and take into account the following about your target community or group:

- their different ways of understanding and describing 'volunteering',
- what will motivate them to volunteer,
- what may prevent them from volunteering.

As well as being culturally influenced, the motivations and barriers to volunteering may vary with age, gender and with how long a community and its individual members have been established in Australia, so it is also important understand how those variables interact in any one community.

Who volunteers where?

Broadly, the National Survey in 2004–2005 found that people from culturally diverse communities volunteer in both formal (e.g. a national not-for-profit) and informal (e.g. a local community group) settings, but that their formal volunteering most commonly takes place in nursing and retirement homes; in schools; and with charitable and sporting organisations. Formal volunteering with organisations working in the environment, health, mental health, youth, the arts and emergency management is much less common. Another research finding was that formal volunteering in one sector increases the chance of participation in other sectors.

'I read a story in the news about these young boys who have been in trouble so I thought I'd better see if I can be of any help.' *Tagi Faanaana, Queensland Cricket volunteer and community rep on a government Task Force*

Untapped volunteer pools for some sectors?

Not-for-profit organisations working in

- the arts and the environment
- emergency management
- health, mental health, and disability services
- youth services

may be ignoring culturally diverse communities as a source of new volunteers.

See **Module 3** for more information about some of the issues involved in recruiting women from CALD backgrounds.

Women and men

More women than men from culturally and linguistically diverse communities volunteer (at a ratio of two or three to one) and gender has a strong impact on the choice of sector for formal volunteering. Men who responded to the National Survey did not participate at all in charitable organisations (such as Salvation Army, Wesley Mission), and women participated the least in sporting organisations.

Older volunteers

People in culturally diverse communities appear more likely to volunteer as they get older. (Note, however, that this may reflect the age profiles of the communities who participated in the National Survey, with 45% of respondents over 60 and 21% between 50 and 60.)

Length of residence

New arrivals and people from longer established communities are each more likely to volunteer than people who have been in Australia for between three and 10 years; however, the reasons why people from these two groups volunteer can be quite different (see *Motivations* below).

'I already retired ... and I thought I should do something, three things, in the coming years. First, I want to live a healthy life; second, keep myself active and be a useful person; thirdly, contribute service which can be a benefit to other people in the society.' *Cissy Chung, Museum Victoria volunteer*

What are they doing when they volunteer?

The National Survey found that when volunteering formally with not-for-profit organisations, people from CALD backgrounds are most likely to be working with the elderly (54%) and assisting people from their own communities (64%). They are much less likely (under 15% of respondents) to be working with young people or people with disabilities, training or mentoring others, or working with animals or the environment. Between 20% and 30% may be involved in fundraising, administration and promotional or educational work.

Interestingly, men were not involved at all in administrative work in their formal volunteering roles. In contrast, administration was the only informal volunteering activity where men were as involved as women (12% each), even though women outnumbered men in the Survey.

Untapped source of Board members and administrators?

People willing to volunteer in governance and administrative roles are in demand in not-for-profits. The National Survey findings suggest men in culturally diverse communities may be an untapped source of volunteers who can perform these roles. Organisations may need to explore what specific internal barriers currently prevent or discourage men from such communities from volunteering with them for these roles, given that they do a lot of this type of work in informal settings.

What 'volunteering' means

In particular cultures the concept of volunteering can be different from the formal definition applied in not-for-profit organisations. In some communities, for historical reasons, the word 'volunteer' can even have negative connotations, and people seen as 'volunteers' may traditionally have had a low standing in their community and may be treated with suspicion and little respect.

Although voluntary effort is widespread in culturally diverse communities, many people do not see their activities as 'volunteering'. Factors which can contribute to varied understandings of volunteering across Australian society include:

- the diverse nature of volunteering activities, and the many sectors in which volunteers participate
- how distinct the private (e.g. family, neighbours, friends) and public spheres are for particular communities, and whether both are seen as targets of voluntary 'helping'
- whether any distinction is made between formal (or more structured) and informal voluntary effort
- whether supporting others in one's community is expected at the level of a social obligation
- expectations of government as a service provider
- how closely community service work is bound up with political group membership or religious practice
- what assumptions are made about why individuals volunteer.⁷

The way people from diverse cultural backgrounds understand 'volunteering' can therefore have an effect on

- whether they will agree, or be reluctant, to volunteer formally, and why;
- how they understand their roles and their responsibilities once they do volunteer; and
- whether and how they want to be acknowledged.

'I try to encourage other Samoans to volunteer with their kids too but they often say, "Do we get paid?" And I say, "That's not our Samoan culture: that's an outside idea. New. Remember in Samoa, we never get paid in our life for these things."' *Tagi Fanaana, volunteer with Queensland Cricket*



© iStockphoto.com/Lynn Seeden

⁷ See Australian Multicultural Foundation & Volunteering Australia 2007, Ch 3 Literature review; Kerr et al. 2001; and Madkhul 2007, *Supporting Volunteering Activities in Australian Muslim Communities, particularly Youth*. Melbourne: Volunteering Australia & Australian Multicultural Foundation.

The National Survey found that volunteers from culturally diverse backgrounds share with other volunteers the desire to 'do something worthwhile' and to 'help the community', as well as a desire to gain personal satisfaction.

Motivations

In culturally diverse communities, volunteering motivations can also differ from those of the community as a whole. In communities where reciprocity and mutual obligation are valued, volunteering may arise from obligation and sense of duty to the community. In contrast, volunteering in the broader community is often performed out of individual altruism or for personal benefit.

The National Survey found that volunteers from culturally diverse backgrounds share with other volunteers the desire to 'do something worthwhile' and to 'help the community', as well as a desire to gain personal satisfaction. And they are more motivated than the Australian community as a whole by spiritual beliefs, but less motivated than the community as a whole by the desire to 'help all Australians'.

'There's not a day goes past where I don't thank God and thank the community for giving me and my family the chance to live here...and so for me, my volunteering is a matter of absolutely giving back.' Jenna Joyan, volunteer with the al-Ghazzali Centre in Sydney

Volunteers' motivations are almost always mixed, and the mix changes with the length of time people have lived in Australia. People who have arrived within the last three years are the most strongly motivated by the desire to make social contact, gain work experience and learn new skills; conversely, this group is one of the least motivated to volunteer by the desire to help their own community, or to put religious or spiritual beliefs into practice.

New arrivals may be very open to volunteering

New immigrants have cultural learning and integration needs that volunteering may readily meet, making them easy to recruit if organisations are prepared to invest in overcoming language difficulties. Retaining them longer term may be more of a challenge, and may depend on making roles available that evolve as they settle and their needs change.

'Personal satisfaction' as a motivation was strongest for people of diverse cultural background either born in Australia or who have lived here for over 50 years. Although 'doing something worthwhile' was a high motivator for all volunteers of diverse background, it was highest for those who had been in Australia for over 50 years.

Volunteers of culturally diverse backgrounds born in Australia were the group most motivated of any to 'help their own community'.

The research also found that organisations often make wrong assumptions about why people from diverse cultural backgrounds volunteer. Organisations underestimate the importance to volunteers from diverse cultures of spiritual beliefs and the desire to help people in their own community. And they can overestimate how motivated such volunteers on the whole are by the desire to learn new skills, gain work experience or satisfy Centrelink requirements. This has implications both for key recruitment messages and for the kind of roles that organisations offer.

Overall, while there were some slight differences between culturally diverse groups in relation to motivation, the demographic variables of age, gender, and length of residence in Australia were more important than cultural differences in shaping why people volunteered.

See **Module 2, Recruitment** for more on:

- getting to know particular CALD communities
- building relationships with them
- developing a targeted recruitment strategy.

Long-established immigrants may need to believe in the cause

Effectively marketing a mainstream not-for-profit organisation's aims and its positive social impact may be a key to recruiting older volunteers from longer established culturally diverse communities, because their motivations are weighted towards doing something worthwhile, achieving personal satisfaction and putting religious and spiritual beliefs into practice.

'I always enjoy and like working with the kids. I want them to mix with everyone, not only the Australians but all the other people from other countries who come in to become Australians. I want them to be mixed and just exchange our cultures. And respect them, you know.' *Tagi Faanaana, Queensland Cricket volunteer*

Barriers

The things that prevented people from diverse cultural backgrounds from volunteering were the same across different ethnic groups, and varied more with age group. Time and family commitments were the most common problem, but the cost of volunteering, particularly for younger people (21–30), and travel or distance from home, particularly for those 60+, were also commonly cited as barriers in the National Survey.

'Difficulties with English' was the third most common barrier to volunteering experienced by people of non-English speaking background, but it was the most common reason given by organisations for not recruiting volunteers from diverse cultural and language backgrounds. This suggests that poor English may be more of a perceived than an actual problem, or at least that some organisations may be overestimating it as a problem.

'We're very clear about the kind of experience it is – that it's talking to kids and discussing things with parents and providing they feel confident enough, then language is absolutely no barrier at all.' *Jane Humphrys, Manager, Volunteer Program, Museum Victoria*

What does this tell us about recruiting volunteers from diverse backgrounds?

The research findings show that there is scope for not-for-profit organisations to recruit from culturally and linguistically diverse communities with the right strategy. And that once a not-for-profit organisation identifies a group or community from which it hopes to recruit, its recruitment strategy will need to take into account:

- understanding of, and attitudes to, volunteering in that community,
- the reasons community members are likely to volunteer,
- the things that will hinder them,
- the supports and incentives that need to be offered.

It's a common myth that people from CALD communities only want to volunteer in their own community and aren't interested in working for mainstream organisations.

COMMON CONCERNS ABOUT INVOLVING PEOPLE FROM CALD BACKGROUNDS IN VOLUNTEERING

'People from CALD backgrounds only want to volunteer in their own communities.'

It's a common myth that people from CALD communities only want to volunteer in their own community and aren't interested in working for mainstream organisations. While this is certainly true for some volunteers from culturally diverse backgrounds, there are many others who are keen to engage with mainstream organisations if encouragement and support are offered.

The 'Step Into Voluntary Work' Program study found that the majority of the program's participants preferred to volunteer in mainstream organisations than within their own community.⁸ Make it clear that your organisation will welcome and support volunteers from a variety of backgrounds, and you should be able to attract suitable candidates.

'Language barriers make it too difficult to work with volunteers from CALD backgrounds.'

While language barriers may present a challenge for some people from CALD backgrounds, many will have an excellent grasp of English and will be able to communicate well in English. Even so, you should keep in mind that they may require some extra help in certain situations.

For example, their comprehension of written English may be excellent but they may find it difficult to understand spoken English, or vice versa. Find out what their strengths and weaknesses are, then make an assessment on what additional training and support they need. Bear in mind that individuals have unique talents and strengths that cannot be identified on the basis of their level of English language skills, and consider whether their volunteer role can be adapted to suit their strengths.

'Our service delivery will suffer if we involve volunteers from CALD backgrounds.'

One of the benefits of involving people from CALD backgrounds in your volunteer program is the likelihood of improved service delivery, particularly if you have clients or service a community from the same cultural or language background.

'People from other cultures won't be able to perform any meaningful work in our organisation – they will only be there as a token gesture.'

There is no reason why volunteers from CALD backgrounds would not be able to perform meaningful work if you have planned and recruited appropriately. As with any other volunteer, their skills should be matched to the position description and appropriate training should be provided where necessary.

Many people who have recently migrated to Australia have skills and qualifications that are highly desirable, but which may not be recognised by Australian employers. Such people often look for Australian workplace experience in the form of volunteer roles and, with the right planning, your organisation could capitalise on this opportunity and create a mutually beneficial relationship.

⁸ Australian Multicultural Foundation, Judith Miralles & Assoc, & RMIT University 2003, *Final Report & Evaluation of the 'Step into Voluntary Work' Program*, Melbourne: Community Support Fund Victoria

Creating an environment that is inclusive of diversity is a vital component of best practice in volunteer management.

'It's too hard to recruit people from CALD backgrounds as volunteers.'

Successfully recruiting volunteers from CALD backgrounds will require some quite specific strategies, and additional research and planning are the key to developing these. But if your organisation is welcoming and supportive and its workplace culture and policies are inclusive – things which will benefit all your volunteers – then it should not be difficult to recruit and retain volunteers from a range of backgrounds.

'Involving volunteers from CALD backgrounds will conflict with our other volunteers.'

This is unlikely to happen, particularly if your volunteers have received cross-cultural training. Cross-cultural training will help mainstream volunteers and staff understand cultural differences in communication, beliefs and work practices. This should help to avoid cultural misunderstandings and improve communication and integration. This training would also provide other volunteers and staff with an insight into the unique skills that people from CALD backgrounds may provide.

In addition, the Step Into Voluntary Work Program found that participants actually preferred mixing with people from other cultures. Participants reported increased confidence and enjoyment from sharing stories with people from different cultures and saw it as a 'valuable experience'.

'Involving volunteers from CALD backgrounds is too demanding on organisational resources.'

Remember that creating an environment that is inclusive of diversity and supported by organisational policies and procedures is a vital component of best practice in volunteer management.

Don't forget to network – consult with your local community (both mainstream and ethnic-specific organisations as well as your local council) as you may find that many of them have already developed internal organisational policies and strategies to assist them in their support and management of volunteers from diverse backgrounds. These organisations may be willing to share these resources, and allow you to use them as a guide for your own policies and processes. It may be useful where possible to involve a representative from one of these organisations in an advisory capacity when developing strategies for improving access for volunteers from CALD backgrounds in your organisation.

Look at the skills within your existing volunteer pool and consider setting up a volunteer buddy system to provide additional support to new volunteers.

RESOURCES

Module 1 draws on the following research:

Australian Multicultural Foundation 1999, *Celebrating Volunteers of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds*, The Australian Multicultural Foundation, RMIT University, Volunteering Victoria and the Department of Premier and Cabinet Multicultural Affairs Unit, Melbourne. Unpublished paper.

Australian Multicultural Foundation, Judith Miralles & Assoc, & RMIT University 2003, *Final Report & Evaluation of the 'Step into Voluntary Work' Program*, Melbourne: Community Support Fund Victoria

Australian Multicultural Foundation & Volunteering Australia 2007, *National Survey of Australian Volunteers from Diverse Cultural and Linguistic Backgrounds*, Melbourne: Volunteering Australia. Access at www.volunteeringaustralia.org under Research

Kerr, L., Savelsberg, H., Sparrow, S. & Tedmanson, D. 2001, *Experiences and perceptions of volunteering in Indigenous and non-English speaking background communities*. Adelaide: Social Policy Research Group, University of South Australia.

Madkhul, D. 2007, *Supporting volunteering activities in Australian Muslim communities, particularly youth. A literature review building on the findings from the National Survey of Australian Volunteers from Diverse Cultural and Linguistic Backgrounds*. Melbourne: Volunteering Australia & Australian Multicultural Foundation. Access at www.volunteeringaustralia.org under Research.



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module 2

Recruitment – a planned approach

This Module offers detailed advice on researching target communities and preparing for new recruits, plus strategies for carrying out a recruitment campaign.

RECRUITING IN 4 STEPS

A successful recruitment strategy can be broken down into four steps:

1. Plan to retain as well as recruit

A recruitment drive will only really be effective for most organisations if it leads to long-term volunteer retention. For this to happen, your recruitment strategy needs to be supported by advance planning. Follow the campaign with a review to find out what worked and what didn't.

2. Base your campaign on research

People with a particular cultural or language background or from one group within a community may be a more obvious or suitable source of future volunteers for your organisation than people from another. Your choice of whom to target and how to target them needs to be based on solid information about the groups or communities in question. Demographics and community history are important, as they will affect why people might be willing to volunteer and the things that will attract/discourage them.

3. Build relationships with target communities

People in the target community or demographic will be more likely to volunteer for your organisation if they know what it does and what it stands for. This can be achieved by 'brand' promotion, but in culturally diverse communities it may be better to establish direct relationships with community groups, gaining community trust and confidence and building knowledge about your organisation and how it benefits them and others.

For more information on:

Managing diversity – see **Module 1**

Volunteering in and by CALD communities – see **Module 1**

Involving women from CALD backgrounds – see **Module 3**

Involving young Muslims – see **Module 4**

Best practice – see **Module 5**

4. Work out your key messages and how you will deliver them

Make sure your campaign spells out what your target group/individuals will get out of volunteering and why they should volunteer with your organisation. Again, you need to take into account community demographics but also values and attitudes to volunteering. Work out the best way to present and disseminate your message.

Recruitment tips

- **Liaise with people from the target communities.** Form relationships with members of local culturally diverse communities to learn more about those communities and ensure that your volunteer strategy is culturally appropriate.

- **Research what would make volunteering an attractive option for people in your local communities.** Identify what is most likely to motivate different sections of the target community to volunteer and make sure your volunteering opportunities correspond to those needs.

- **Word volunteer advertisements in a way that appeals to people from diverse backgrounds.** For example, people from diverse cultural backgrounds express interest in learning new skills, meeting new people from different cultures, learning about Australian workplaces, and gaining workplace experience. Make sure you include some of these terms in your ads.

- **Identify where you will get maximum value from your advertising.** Find out which media are most popular in the local community, tap into local networks, use word-of-mouth promotion, put posters up in local meeting spots or any other places frequented by your target market.

- **Speak to other organisations that have contacts in target communities to identify 'leaders'.** For example, contact Migrant Resource Centres, local councils, ethnic councils and cultural groups in your area.

- **Use 'experts' or 'leaders' to help recruit in communities where they play an influential role.**

- **Go out into the community to recruit new volunteers.** Go to places where people from local communities are likely to spend time, such as local shopping centres, community centres, child care centres and schools.

- **Go offsite to recruit and interview rather than insisting that volunteers come to you.** Hold information sessions at community venues where people are used to meeting and feel comfortable, and where there may be other facilities and supports that will encourage people to attend, e.g. childcare.

- **Use valued volunteers to help recruit and train the next generation of volunteers.** Not only will this help you to provide culturally appropriate training for your new volunteers, it will also help with succession planning.

- **Set Key Performance Indicators for managers of volunteers relating to the number of volunteers from CALD backgrounds in their program.**

Think about what you need to do to ensure that your organisation can absorb, involve and support culturally diverse volunteers effectively.

1. PLANNING

Before you launch a recruitment campaign aimed at one or more immigrant communities or at individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds, think about what you need to do to ensure that your organisation can absorb, involve and support these volunteers effectively.

Some of this is just good volunteer management, and Module 5 contains 'best practice' tips to help manage volunteers of diverse cultural and language backgrounds in line with the National Standards. But you also need to think about

- obtaining management support for the initiative;
- how many volunteers needing specific support the organisation can take in successfully at one time;
- what sort of positions you are going to offer;
- what training your current paid and volunteer staff need to support the new recruits;
- what sort of induction and training program you need to develop.

Selling it to management

The general benefits of making your organisation more reflective of the community have been outlined in Module 1.

Try also to identify for management some specific benefits of greater involvement by volunteers of culturally diverse backgrounds. These could be to do with your organisation's role, its stakeholders and clients, its strategic direction, and the threats it faces and/or opportunities it has for growth.

'Up until 1980, Surf Life Saving was a male-dominated organisation and women were not allowed to join as active members. These days, there's almost a 50/50 split in the membership and if those changes hadn't happened, then the organisation would definitely be irrelevant to Australia now. Probably almost non-existent. I think there are parallels...to what needs to happen in this day and age in relation to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.'

Chris Giles, National Development Manager, Surf Life Saving Australia

Try to put a dollar value on savings or efficiencies that could result from greater involvement of CALD communities, and which could outweigh or offset any costs involved in recruitment and specific support.

Aim to secure management support that is concrete and specific, not just general. For example, ask management for an undertaking if necessary to:

- review and amend policies and procedures;
- fund specific training for staff and new recruits;
- fund translations and signage in other languages;
- participate in community presentations;
- get directly involved in building relationships with leaders and organisations in CALD communities.

For tips on volunteer job design, download the guide to *Designing Volunteer Roles and Position Descriptions* from the Volunteering Australia website at www.volunteeringaustralia.org under Skills and Training.

Assessing your organisation's capacity

Before you start recruiting, make a realistic assessment of how many new volunteers with specific needs your organisation can absorb. It's better to recruit only two or three people of a specific background or from a local community, and support them effectively so that they become long-term volunteers and ambassadors for your organisation, than to recruit 20 whom you cannot properly involve or support, and who then leave.

Look at what level of demand you can realistically expect to place on staff time, budgets, physical resources, processes and set the recruitment target accordingly.

'Most of our budget goes on rewards and recognition of one sort or another and we have a lot of focus on communication as well.' *Jane Humphrys, Manager, Volunteer Program, Museum Victoria*

Reviewing volunteer positions

Think about the positions you can offer new volunteers and how these fit in with the jobs already done by paid and other volunteer staff.

What adjustments do you need to make to either the roles or the team structure if a position is filled by someone who has not lived in Australia for very long, or who has limited English? Do you need to simplify the role? Do you need to redesign the role, so that parts of it (e.g. any elements needing English literacy) are shared or done by someone else?

Do you need to reorganise the team so that all new volunteers have a buddy or work partner?

Will the position meet the volunteer's needs, and deliver the benefits offered by the recruitment campaign (e.g. for social contact or work experience or English language practice)?

Note that this review process could benefit **all** your volunteers. Organisations which already have broadly generic and flexible volunteer position descriptions without too many detailed, specific requirements will find it easier to do.

Involving existing staff

Involve existing volunteer and paid staff from the beginning in your planning, and in the recruitment and induction of the new volunteers, especially if you plan to use a buddy system. This will help establish relationships, give you a good source of advice about what will and what won't work, and give staff a stake in a successful outcome.

Your new volunteers are more likely to work well and stay longer if they feel comfortable in the organisation, and feel accepted and supported by other staff. So, when recruiting volunteers from diverse cultural backgrounds you may also need to provide current paid and volunteer staff with basic cultural awareness and cross-cultural communication training.

Encourage staff to see cross-cultural training as a sensible investment in building and sustaining workplace harmony and diversity, and something that can benefit them as well.

You will find resources to help with cross-cultural issues and training in the online *Subject Guide – Involving Volunteers from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds* on the Volunteering Australia website at www.volunteeringaustralia.org under Skills and Training.

Selection and screening

Think about how volunteers will be selected. Making people fill out a form or apply in writing could unnecessarily exclude those with limited English literacy, so offer some alternatives.

Do you need to formally screen applicants using a police or 'working with children' check? People from particular countries of origin can have very negative views and experience of the police and may be put off by the idea of a background check. Think about how this can be managed and explained to applicants. You may need to prepare a simply worded written explanation of the check and how the information in it is used that people can take away with them for future reference.

If you plan to interview people, think about the interview format and questions for people with limited spoken English. Consider using interpreters, or holding group interviews, perhaps with a community member to help. Check that the interview venue is appropriate. If Muslim women are being interviewed, should the interviewer also be a woman, and vice versa for men?

Induction and training

Look at your standard induction package and training from the point of view of someone with limited English and/or not much experience of Australian workplaces.

Are there too many written handouts? Is the language too abstract or jargon-heavy? Are people given more information than they can process in one session or remember later? Do they really need an org chart, or just the name and photo of the person they should take a problem to? Are there ways of checking that new volunteers have understood the essentials?

Decide what key pieces of information and 'how to' knowledge you want people to take away from induction. Then look at how you and your staff can best provide this information to a new group of volunteers from diverse cultural and language backgrounds. Focus on explanations in simple English, use of pictures and signs, demonstrations (especially of key OH&S procedures), walk-throughs, role plays, hands-on trials of equipment, etc.

Consider making cross-cultural training for **all** staff a part of the induction process for new recruits of CALD background (who may also need to raise their cultural awareness). This will help team building, but may also give new recruits some of the cultural knowledge that underpins workplace practices.

The workplace

Look at what changes might need to be made to the actual workplace.

Can safety signs be changed from words to symbols? Is there a quiet place that can be used as a prayer room? Is there anywhere private for small children to be changed or mothers to breastfeed?

Document your recruitment goals and strategies at the start and keep records as you go.

Review

Although a review of the effectiveness of the whole recruitment process can only happen once you have new volunteers and they have started work with your organisation, it also needs to be planned for. An analysis of your approach to recruitment to see what improvements can be made and what needs to be changed will be easier to do if you documented your recruitment goals and strategies at the outset and then kept records about what was done as you went along.

- Keep track of all costs associated with planning and implementing the recruitment campaign.

- Keep records of the promotional material and advertisement placements you have used, and ask new volunteers where they heard about you and why they volunteered.

- Always make provision in information, induction and training sessions for feedback.

- Survey volunteers on their experience once they have settled in. Ask them for feedback on any printed recruitment materials, and information brochures and booklets.

- Make sure that management has implemented agreed changes to policies and procedures or budgets designed to facilitate involvement of volunteers from CALD backgrounds.

The planning outlined in this section will help you ensure your organisation has the capacity to take in and support new volunteers from CALD backgrounds. At the same time, you need to be gathering information that will help you decide who and how to recruit. The next section – on Research – will help you do this.

2. RESEARCH

Finding out about culturally diverse communities

Becoming familiar with the cultural and language communities living in the area in which your organisation operates or is based is essential if you want to recruit from those communities in a targeted way.

Local government is a good place to start

Most metropolitan councils will be able to tell you which are the largest CALD communities living within their boundaries and what languages they use, and they may also have more detailed demographic information. (See, for example, the information about particular communities on the website of the Monash City Council in Victoria.) They may also be able to tell you which CALD community groups operate within the municipality and who the key contacts are.

Ethnic (or Multicultural) Communities Councils (ECCs)

Your state or regional ECC will be another good source of general information about CALD communities in your state, and a starting point for contacting organisations within each CALD community or peak organisations for particular CALD communities within a region. Ethnic Communities Councils could also be a contact point for individual bilingual or multilingual volunteers who can act as community guides.



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There is an **Ethnic (or Multicultural) Communities Council (ECC)** in every state and some states also have regional ECCs. Nationally they are represented on the **Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils (FECCA)**. The Ethnic Communities Councils are state peak organisations representing, advocating for and in some cases servicing the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse communities in each state. They are generally non-government and not-for-profit organisations with both individual and organisational members, and they often involve volunteers in their program delivery. See Resource list at the end of the Module.

State government information sources

Each state has one or more departments which deal specifically with issues relating to multiculturalism, community building and CALD communities in that state. Their websites are another source of information at the state level about CALD communities and other peak bodies that deal with CALD communities, although the level and type of information varies from state to state. See Resource list at the end of the Module.

In Victoria the Victorian Office of Multicultural Affairs also carries profiles of 30 established and emerging communities at <http://www.voma.vic.gov.au> >Home>Population>Community profile.

National overview of CALD communities

If your organisation is a national one with recruitment strategies planned and driven centrally or at a state level, then information at this level may be more useful than local information.

You can download selected national demographic data and statistics on overseas birthplaces, languages used other than English, English proficiency, ancestry and religion from the Census of Population and Housing free from both the Australian Bureau of Statistics (at www.abs.gov.au) and Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) (at www.immi.gov.au) websites. The DIAC website also carries useful nation-wide community profiles.

Guides, gatekeepers and networkers

It is useful to find people, especially if they are bilingual, who can act as guides to a CALD community and can

- help you build a relationship with the community
- provide information and advice about the community when you are planning recruitment.

If they have experience or an understanding of volunteering, they may also be able to

- act as ambassadors to their communities for volunteering in mainstream organisations, and
- become actively involved/assist in your recruitment drive and in volunteer orientation and training.

Get to know a range of people and organisations within a community.

It is a good idea to use more than one avenue for getting to know a community, and to try to build relationships with a range of individuals and organisations. Also, be aware of the different sections of a particular community that you may wish to connect with, such as women, young people, or retirees, who will have their own organisations focussed on interests, activities and goals specific to that group.

➤ **Community leaders**

CALD communities often have prominent members who are respected and influential in those communities because of their roles as community organisers and leaders, advocates, teachers, or religious figures.

These community leaders can introduce you to community networks and advise on community settlement history and issues that may shape your recruitment strategy and messages. Finding such people and securing their interest in your organisation and help with promoting it can be an invaluable step in recruiting from a particular community.

At the same time, you need to be aware that people with influence in a community can also act as gatekeepers, filtering and vetting the information that goes to community members, and controlling your organisation's access at a community level. Community opinion about an influential leader can also sometimes be polarised.

➤ **Networkers and service providers**

People who are involved in providing services to CALD communities and/or building community networks, because of either their paid or volunteer work, can be useful guides to particular communities. Places to look for them include:

- HACC, family services and childcare co-ordinators in municipalities with culturally diverse populations

- Community health centres and maternal child and health centres

- Migrant Resource Centres, Settlement Associations and refugee support groups

- Libraries in municipalities with culturally diverse populations

- Community legal centres

- Community centres and Neighbourhood Houses

- Radio stations broadcasting to CALD communities

- ESL and adult literacy providers/local TAFE campuses.

For more information see the Resource list at end of Module 2.

For more information on recruiting women specifically, see **Module 3**; and for recruiting young Muslims specifically, see **Module 4**.

What motivates volunteers from CALD backgrounds?

For research findings on how age, gender, length of residence and other factors can affect volunteering patterns in CALD communities, see **Module 1**.

Who are you targeting and why?

You may have decided to recruit people from a range of different cultural backgrounds in order to be generally more inclusive, or because your organisation is located and/or provides services in an area where many different groups have settled.

Alternatively, you may want to recruit quite a specific demographic (for example, young Arabic-speaking women or Greek- or Croatian-speaking retirees) because of your clients' needs, or because of a community need, or because you think they are the most available group.

In either case, you need to try to learn more about each group in order to work out the best way of aligning your organisation's workforce needs with the likely interests and needs of people in that group.

Research shows that age, gender, length of residence, English proficiency, employment/retirement status are all factors that interact with cultural background to influence how and why people volunteer. Information about these characteristics can tell you

- how you will attract or appeal to volunteers
- the kinds of volunteer roles you need to offer
- the kinds of support they might need.

The template that follows lists some of the questions that will help you build up an understanding of the community you want to recruit from. You can find some of this information in the community profiles on the DIAC website, but the best way is to talk to community members and to people who work or have regular contact with the communities in question.

Template. Pre-recruitment Fact Finding

Find out:	Related issues affecting recruitment strategy:	Findings:
<p>Where are people in this group from, why did they migrate, and over what period?</p> <p>Was it for economic or for political reasons?</p> <p>Were they displaced by conflict? Is it a refugee community?</p>	<p><i>May be relevant to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>how community members view Australian society and institutions</i> • <i>how secure the community is</i> • <i>how integrated its members are</i> • <i>how closed or open to outsiders it is</i> • <i>how educated or literate community members are</i> 	
<p>How long has this community been in Australia?</p>	<p><i>May be relevant to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>diversity within the community and complexity of its networks</i> • <i>how localised or dispersed it is</i> • <i>how integrated people are, and how well they understand Australian cultural norms</i> • <i>how well they speak English</i> • <i>reasons for volunteering</i> • <i>how dependent community members are on each other</i> • <i>whether it includes two or three Australian-born generations</i> • <i>whether it includes retirees or seniors</i> 	
<p>Is there a tradition of volunteering in their country of origin? How do they view volunteering?</p>	<p><i>May be relevant to how you promote and present participation in your organisation</i></p>	
<p>Does the community have high or low unemployment?</p>	<p><i>May be relevant to their reasons for volunteering and availability of time to volunteer</i></p>	
<p>How important are community and family networks?</p>	<p><i>May be relevant to how information reaches people and how you recruit them</i></p>	
<p>Is it a strongly religious community of a single faith or is it multi-faith?</p>	<p><i>May be relevant to reasons for volunteering but also to barriers to involvement and retention</i></p>	
<p>What languages are spoken at home and in the community?</p> <p>How well do people speak English?</p> <p>Are they likely to be literate in their own language?</p>	<p><i>May be relevant to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>your organisational needs</i> • <i>how easily people can pick up English, and whether it is feasible to make building spoken and written English skills part of an orientation/retention program</i> 	
<p>What is the age profile of the community? The gender balance?</p>	<p><i>May be relevant to their motivations and the kinds of roles you decide to offer</i></p>	
<p>What are their support needs?</p>	<p><i>People may be more likely to volunteer if offered transport, or childcare, or if costs are reimbursed</i></p>	

This template is available in modifiable Word format from the Volunteering Australia website at www.volunteeringaustralia.org

How well known
is your organisation
in local CALD
communities?

3. BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH CALD COMMUNITIES

Promoting your organisation to CALD communities

People in CALD communities will be more inclined to volunteer if they understand something about your organisation, how it benefits both their community and the broader society, and what volunteering with your organisation might offer them as individuals.

Is your organisation relevant to CALD communities?

Build on your research into the demographics and history of local CALD communities to identify ways in which your organisation is relevant to and can benefit members or groups within those communities.

For example, do you:

- provide services direct to community members?
- provide services to the broader community which make the neighbourhood safer and more liveable?
- undertake or fund research which benefits community members?
- provide services or work on projects that promote community cohesion and tolerance?
- provide opportunities for involvement in the broader society?
- give young people from those communities opportunities to acquire employment skills?

This information will help you to shape effective recruitment messages and also to promote support for the organisation in particular CALD communities.

Make your organisation visible to CALD communities

How well known is your organisation amongst local CALD communities? Do they understand what your work is, and how it affects or benefits members of their community and the broader community? Ways to increase this recognition include:

➤ Signage in languages other than English

Use selected languages other than English in the signs outside the building and around the entry and reception areas to give local CALD communities a clear idea of what you do.

➤ Printed material and brochures

If possible, have your basic promotional brochures and fliers translated into selected languages other than English, and distribute these at access points for local CALD communities, e.g. the local Migrant Resource Centre, library, municipal offices, community health centre, but also at local businesses run by members of CALD communities. Include the names and faces of key paid and volunteer personnel, their roles, and what other languages they speak.



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➤ Offer to conduct an information session for a CALD community

Once you have established relationships with particular members of a community, you can ask them to work with you to help facilitate or run information sessions for other people in their community, preferably at a venue belonging to or used by that community.

If possible, have the presentation made in the community language. If this is not possible, then keep the presentation simple, make as much use as possible of images and photos that clearly convey your messages, and try to ensure that you have someone present who can answer questions in the community language.

Be prepared to start with basic explanations of your not-for-profit service or activity model, as these are not the same across all cultures. For example, the 'blood bank' concept where blood is freely donated by members of the community for use in the hospital system may not be understood by people from countries where blood is traded and has to be purchased.

➤ Identify service users from local CALD communities

If your organisation already involves people from local CALD communities, or they are clients or service users, they may be willing to help with information sessions, or with distribution of brochures and so on. Identifying the benefits they receive from your organisation can also be information that you then feed into your recruitment strategy for volunteers.

Forming partnerships with CALD community organisations

Partnerships between organisations are another way both to raise the profile of your organisation with a CALD community, and to build relationships with people in that community. Partnerships can be built around:

- Service delivery
Your organisation and a community organisation can join forces to deliver a particular service to a CALD community.

- Joint projects

- Sharing or jointly owning facilities or resources (e.g. buildings, vehicles, information resources)

- Exchanging or lending staff, providing complementary skills

- Organising events and promotions together

- Helping to obtain funding for mutually useful projects and services

Reinforce positive ideas about volunteering and address the concerns, fears or negative ideas that your target recruits may have.

4. THE RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN

Key messages

Your recruitment campaign needs to be built on key messages which reinforce the positive ideas you want to promote about volunteering but which also address the concerns, fears or negative ideas that the people you would like to recruit may have. In the case of volunteers from culturally diverse backgrounds, it's important to take into account what we already know from research about their volunteering preferences and why they do and don't volunteer. This was discussed in more detail in *What do we know about volunteers from CALD Backgrounds?* in Module 1.

The national research suggests the following messages could be important:

- Volunteering can be done at times to suit you and your family.
- Volunteering is a worthwhile way to spend your time after you retire.
- Volunteering brings people from different communities together to help others.
- Our organisation needs the knowledge and experience of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- We welcome people from culturally diverse backgrounds in our organisation.
- You will be helping other people when you volunteer with us.
- Volunteering means giving your time freely to help other people.
- You can learn new and useful skills when you volunteer.
- Volunteering can give you work experience.
- When you volunteer with us you will be able to practise your English.

But your organisation should also try to identify what issues you need to address in your recruitment campaign in the research you do with local communities.

Promotion and advertising – what works best

According to the National Survey findings, ways to reach CALD communities with information about your organisation and volunteering, ranked from most to least effective, are:

- Word-of-mouth, through family and friends
- Through other community organisations
- Media (e.g. ethnic radio and press)
- Presentations
- Brochures in community languages.

Overall, the research suggests that it is better for organisations to put their resources into building links with community organisations and strengthening word-of-mouth networks, than into paid recruitment advertising and promotion.

'Word of mouth' is the most commonly used recruitment method in Australian volunteering generally (ABS 2001). The National Survey confirmed this, finding that it was used by 72% of organisations surveyed, whether they targeted CALD volunteers or not. And 46% of volunteers of CALD background reported that they had been recruited in this way.

Find out whether people within a community are likely to be literate in their own language. This could determine whether you use print (including brochures and flyers) or radio.

It's hard to plan promotion around 'word of mouth' but these findings suggest that the quality of the volunteer experience is itself an important advertisement, one that will be spread by current volunteers, and that it could be better to spend on volunteer support and management than on expensive once-off advertising. A reliance on word-of-mouth promotion also favours recruiting small numbers incrementally over time, over large-scale periodic recruitment.

Channelling information through community organisations is also effective: 46% of volunteers of CALD backgrounds said it was how they found out about their volunteer-involving organisation, and it was a recruitment method used by 73% of the organisations which specifically targeted CALD volunteers, and by 48% of those which did not.

Using other community organisations could mean supplying them with printed information and asking them to pass it on to clients and members. Or it could mean asking them to get actively involved in your recruitment campaign and help you promote your organisation to their members, through shared presentations, for example, or a joint project.

Media (press and radio) is a popular recruitment tool with organisations but may be less effective than many think in reaching potential volunteers.

The National Survey showed that almost half (43%) of the organisations which were actively recruiting volunteers of CALD background used media, but only 17% of volunteers surveyed said media was how they had learned about the organisation.

Different language groups rated the effectiveness of recruiting through the media differently: across the 13 language communities surveyed, 23% of Arabic-speakers and 28% of Greek-speakers said they had found out about their organisations this way, while fewer than 10% of Croatian and Spanish-speakers had.

This suggests that a decision about whether to use community press and radio advertising, and which channels to use, needs to be informed by the research you do with specific communities.

Tips for using ethnic media:

- Try to find out which newspapers and radio stations are listened to by most people in a language community, and also whether they are aligned with particular sectional interests, as this could cut out some of the people you want to reach.

- Find out whether people within a community are likely to be literate in their own language. This could determine whether you use print (including brochures and flyers) or radio.

- The media outlets themselves may be the best people to help you draft and translate an ad for their listeners/readers.

- As well as spelling out what you need and what you can offer volunteers, advertisements in other languages should make it clear what volunteering is (e.g. 'giving your time freely to help the community') in case the concept is not well understood. (This also applies to brochures and presentations.)

- Find out whether particular communities are 'online'. The **internet** was not investigated as a recruitment method by the National Survey, but some CALD communities have embraced it as a networking and info-sharing tool, with websites and forums run both by organisations and enthusiastic individuals. Community internet sites may work as an electronic 'word of mouth' while allowing you to place shaped, targeted messages. Or you may be able to link your own website to community sites.

Presentations can also be used as 'get to know you' sessions.

Guide to ethnic media

The **National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters Council** website lists broadcasters by state and programs by language at <http://www.nembc.org.au>

The **Community Broadcasting** sector in general can be accessed at <http://www.cbonline.org.au>

Ethnic print, radio and TV outlets are also listed on the websites of some **state government multicultural agencies**. See Resource list.

Presentations and brochures showed up in the National Survey as the least effective recruitment tools (only 12% of volunteers from CALD backgrounds were recruited this way), although brochures were much more successful with some language groups (e.g. Vietnamese, Spanish, Mandarin, and Arabic-speakers) than with others (e.g. Italian, Greek and Croatian-speakers).

Presentations have an advantage over printed material in that they can also be used as 'get to know you' sessions, where people within your organisation can start building relationships with CALD community members, and where people can ask questions and find out what **they** want to know about volunteering with your organisation.

Word-of-mouth promotion helps you recruit small numbers over time.

RESOURCES

Organisations

Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia (FECCA)

T: 02 6282 5755

F: 02 6282 5734

E: admin@fecca.org.au

W: www.fecca.org.au

Refugee Council of Australia (ROCA)

T: 02 9211 9333

F: 02 9211 9288

E: info@refugeecouncil.org.au

W: www.refugeecouncil.org.au

Victorian Office

T: 03 9348 2245

F: 03 9342 9799

E: melbourne@refugeecouncil.org.au

'Diversity Works!' at <http://www.diversityaustralia.gov.au> is a policy of the Australian Government to promote the benefits for business and the economy of utilising the cultural and linguistic skills of the Australian workforce. While the site is aimed at for-profit business development it has lots of links and info: statistics, case studies and tips that may be useful to a range of organisations.

InfoXchange Service Seeker at <http://www.serviceseeker.com.au> lists many ethnic organisations by sector. Choose 'Focus' from bottom menu, then select Service Type, then Service Target: Ethnic for listings including ethnic community organisations.

Ethnic Communities Councils throughout Australia

New South Wales:

Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW

T: 02 9319 0288

F: 02 9319 4229

E: admin@eccnsw.org.au

W: www.eccnsw.org.au

Ethnic Communities' Council of Newcastle & Hunter Region

T: 02 4929 5880

F: 02 4929 5064

E: eccnhr@optusnet.com.au

W: <http://members.optusnet.com.au/~eccnhr>

Illawarra Ethnic Communities' Council

T: 02 4229 7566

F: 02 4226 3146

E: admin@iecc.org.au

W: www.iecc.org.au

Multicultural Council of Wagga Wagga

T: 02 6921 6666

F: 02 6921 6669

E: multicultural@mcww.org.au

Transcultural Community Council

T: 02 6829 2014

F: 02 6829 0902

E: tccinc@lightningridge.net.au

The quality of the volunteer's experience is itself an important advertisement for volunteering.

Australian Capital Territory:

ACT Multicultural Council Incorporated
 T: 02 6249 8994
 F: 02 6248 6767
 E: momari@bigpond.com

Victoria:

Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria
 T: 03 9349 4122
 F: 03 9349 4967
 E: eccv@eccv.org.au
 W: www.eccv.org.au

Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council
 T: 03 5337 0700
 F: 03 5337 0777
 E: info@brmc.org.au
 W: www.brmc.org.au

Diversitat, Geelong
 T: 03 5221 6044
 F: 03 5223 2848
 E: gmrc@diversitat.org.au
 W: www.diversitat.org.au

Gippsland Ethnic Communities' Council Inc.
 T: 03 5166 1502
 F: 03 5166 1888
 E: George.Venturini@arts.monash.edu.au

Bendigo Regional Ethnic Communities' Council Inc. (BREC)
 T: 03 5441 6644
 F: 03 5441 6644
 E: brecc@bigpond.net.au
 W: www.brec.org.au

Sunraysia Ethnic Communities' Council Inc. (SECCI)
 T: 03 5022 1006
 F: 03 5021 2450
 E: rosac@migrantsservices.com.au
 W: www.migrantsservices.com.au

Ethnic Communities' Council of Shepparton and District
 T: 03 5831 2395
 F: 03 5831 3764
 E: ecshepp@mcmedia.com.au

Queensland:

Ethnic Communities' Council of QLD
 T: 07 3844 9166
 F: 07 3846 4453
 E: administration@eccq.com.au
 W: www.eccq.com.au

Multicultural Communities Council Gold Coast Inc.
 T: 07 5527 8011
 F: 07 5527 8531
 E: mail@mccgc.com.au
 W: www.mccgc.com.au

As well as spelling out what you need and what you can offer volunteers, advertisements in other languages should make it clear what volunteering is.

Ethnic Communities' Council of Logan

T: 07 3299 3377
 F: 07 3809 2168
 E: eccloganinc@bigpond.com
 W: www.ecclinc.ws

Multicultural Communities' Council of the Sunshine Coast

T: 07 5443 9213
 F: 07 5443 9213
 E: mcccsc_inc@yahoo.com.au

Migrant Resource Centre Townsville/Thuringowa Ltd

T: 07 4772 4800
 F: 07 4772 1840
 E: farvardin.daliri@bigpond.com
 W: www.townsville-mrc.org

South Australia:

Multicultural Communities' Council of South Australia

T: 08 8410 0300
 F: 08 8410 0311
 E: mccsa@mccsa.org.au
 W: www.multiwebsa.org.au

Western Australia:

Ethnic Communities' Council of WA

T: 08 9227 5322
 F: 08 9227 5460
 E: eccwa@iinet.net.au
 W: www.multicultural.online.wa.gov.au/eccwa

Tasmania:

Multicultural Council of Tasmania

T: 03 6231 5067
 F: 03 6231 5069
 E: mcot@tassie.net.au
 W: www.mcot.org.au

Ethnic Communities' Council of Northern Tasmania

T: 03 6344 1241
 E: stella@goiser.com

Northern Territory:

Multicultural Council of NT

T: 08 8945 9122
 F: 08 8945 9155
 E: admin@mcnt.org.au
 W: www.mcnt.org.au

Press and radio are popular recruitment tools with organisations but may be less effective than many think in reaching potential volunteers.

State government departments responsible for communities/ multicultural and ethnic affairs

Community Relations Commission NSW
<http://www.crc.nsw.gov.au/index.htm>

Victorian Multicultural Commission
www.multicultural.vic.gov.au

Multicultural Affairs Queensland
www.premiers.qld.gov.au >About the Department> About Us> Divisions and Work Units> Governance>Multicultural Affairs Queensland

Department of the Chief Minister, Multicultural Affairs
<http://www.nt.gov.au/dcm/multicultural/>

Online WA Multicultural Communities Gateway
www.multicultural.online.wa.gov.au

Multicultural Communities of SA
www.multiwebsa.org.au

The Office of Multicultural Affairs
www.dhcs.act.gov.au/community/mau

Multicultural Tasmania
www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/multitas

For women's groups, see Resources at the end of Module 3.



module 3

Recruiting women from diverse cultural and language backgrounds as volunteers

This Module deals with engaging women from diverse cultural and language backgrounds as volunteers. The Module will be most useful if used in conjunction with:

- **Module 1** which puts culturally diverse communities and volunteering in Australia into context

- **Module 2** which deals with pre-recruitment planning and recruitment of volunteers

- **Module 5** which offers best practice strategies for involving volunteers from diverse backgrounds.

Additional funding for Module 3 was provided by the Office for Women.

WHY INVOLVE WOMEN FROM CALD BACKGROUNDS IN YOUR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM?

The Multicultural Women's Summit held in Queensland in June 2005 revealed that women from CALD backgrounds shared visions of being visible and accepted, having access to opportunities and being empowered to make decisions.⁹ They expressed a strong desire for their diversity to be celebrated and to be embraced by the broader society. These women were eager to engage with the community and become visible in all sectors of society.

Issues identified by the women at the Summit as preventing them from participating in employment opportunities, and similarly in volunteer work, included difficulties in integrating work with family, lifestyle responsibilities, and lack of culturally appropriate support services.

⁹ Multicultural Women's Advisory Committee (Qld) 2005, *Empowered and Embraced. Report of the Multicultural Women's Summit, 1 June 2005*, Brisbane: Multicultural Women's Advisory Committee and Queensland Department of Local Government, Sport and Recreation

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Women from CALD backgrounds are keen to engage in volunteer work in mainstream organisations but often do not have the confidence to do so.

These findings were supported by the 'Step into Voluntary Work' program, an initiative which provided training and support to women volunteers of culturally diverse backgrounds.¹⁰ The program revealed that women from these backgrounds were keen to engage in volunteer work in mainstream organisations but often did not have the confidence to do so. However, with the training provided through the program, they gained the confidence and networks to move into the mainstream volunteer sector.

In a South Australian study¹¹, some volunteers from CALD backgrounds suggested that they were reluctant to volunteer in mainstream organisations due to concern about how they would be accepted in the organisation. They were worried that their recruitment would simply be a token gesture and they would not actually feel part of the organisation. Nevertheless, these volunteers indicated they would happily work for a mainstream organisation if they were given encouragement and a warm welcome.

As volunteers, women from culturally diverse backgrounds can bring to not-for-profit organisations unique and special skills, and a strong motivation to make their volunteering a success. ABS Survey figures discussed further on show that volunteering by Australian women born overseas is growing rapidly.

Through engagement with women in culturally diverse communities, not-for-profit organisations can connect with those communities in mutually beneficial ways and can help women in CALD communities connect to the wider society.

This Module is designed to help not-for-profit organisations consider the issues which can affect volunteer participation by women from CALD backgrounds, and come up with strategies directed at successfully recruiting culturally diverse women volunteers.

¹⁰ Australian Multicultural Foundation, Judith Miralles & Assoc, & RMIT University 2003, *Final Report & Evaluation of the 'Step into Voluntary Work' Program*, Melbourne: Community Support Fund Victoria.

¹¹ Kerr, L., Savelsberg, H., Sparrow, S. & Tedmanson, D. 2001, *Experiences and perceptions of volunteering in Indigenous and non-English speaking background communities*. Adelaide: Social Policy Research Group, University of South Australia.

Across the Australian population, slightly more women than men volunteer, and this is also true for culturally diverse and immigrant communities.

WOMEN AND VOLUNTEERING

Gender and volunteering – the statistics

In Australia in 2000...

33% of all adult women volunteered

31% of all adult men volunteered

27% of adult women born overseas volunteered

24% of adult men born overseas volunteered

Source: ABS 2001, *Voluntary Work 2000*, Cat no. 4441.0

Across the Australian population, slightly more women than men volunteer, and this is also true for culturally diverse and immigrant communities.

According to the ABS, the people most likely of all to volunteer are women in their mid-30s to mid-40s with partners and dependent children – with 45% of these women volunteering compared to 28% of partnered women with no children.¹² Also, women who work part-time are much more likely to volunteer (44%) than women who work full-time (31%). These figures suggest that although family commitments and the time constraints they may impose can make volunteering difficult, they can also give rise to volunteering opportunities through increased community involvement and can lead women to volunteer.

As women are the group which most readily volunteers, not-for profits which want to sustain or increase their volunteer numbers need to get to grips with what women want from volunteering. This is particularly true for organisations hoping to recruit volunteers in culturally diverse communities, since women in these communities often have quite specific issues which can affect whether as well as how they volunteer.

What we know about volunteering by women from CALD backgrounds

Participation in volunteering by all Australians grew by one third between 1995 and 2000. However, volunteering by overseas-born women grew by over 40% in that period.¹³

The National Survey of volunteers from culturally diverse backgrounds¹⁴ canvassed volunteers from 11 different language backgrounds, and all but one of these communities had been established in Australia for at least 20 years. Sixty-eight percent of the people who responded to the National Survey were women, and over 80% of the group were over 40, so the findings of the Survey very much reflect women's experiences of volunteering, but also the experience of older people in established culturally diverse communities.

¹² ABS 2002, 'Voluntary work 2000' in *Year Book Australia*, Cat. no. 1301.0. Accessed at <www.abs.gov.au> 27 May 2007

¹³ From 24 % to 32% for the total population and from 18% to 26.6% for women born overseas (ABS 2001, *Voluntary Work 2000*, Cat. no. 4441.0)

¹⁴ Australian Multicultural Foundation & Volunteering Australia 2007, *National Survey of Volunteers from Diverse Cultural and Linguistic Backgrounds*, Melbourne: Volunteering Australia

See **Module 1** for a detailed discussion of the National Survey findings.

Motivations

The National Survey found that the most common motivations across all respondents (both women and men) to volunteer were:

- a desire to do something worthwhile
- a desire to help people in one's own community
- personal satisfaction.

However, both women and men from less well established, emerging communities were much more likely to want to volunteer in order to have social contact and to gain work experience. Finding pathways to employment was also an important motivator for older women from culturally diverse backgrounds who participated in the 'Step into Voluntary Work' program in 2003. These women also saw volunteering as a way to connect with the broader Australian community.

'I never went to the Museum before I volunteer. But now, I go to the Museum and open my eyes. There are a lot of new things to learn.' Cissy Chung, volunteer at Museum Victoria

Barriers

The greatest barrier to volunteering reported in the Survey was time and/or family constraints, although location and having to travel were also a problem. For people aged under 30 years, expenses associated with volunteering were a barrier, although these expenses could be linked to travel as well.

Volunteering preferences

While the participation rate of women and men in volunteering is comparable, the type of roles they occupy can be quite different. Women seem to volunteer more in community services and direct provision of services while men tend to predominate in emergency services, sport and recreation and volunteer management positions.¹⁵ In keeping with this trend, the National Survey found that women from CALD backgrounds tend to volunteer more in community services (e.g. in nursing or retirement homes, in charitable organisations and in schools) than in other sectors such as the arts, sport, or the environment. The 'Step into Voluntary Work' Program in 2003 found that its participants, all women, also preferred placements in administration, aged care, disabilities and child care work.

Having young and/or school-aged children to care for also influences the type of volunteer roles women are attracted to, with preference being given to roles that don't interfere with their family responsibilities.

For young women, roles that offer flexibility, social networking, mental stimulation, leadership opportunities and the opportunity to work for a meaningful cause are likely to appeal.¹⁶

¹⁵ Oppenheimer, M. & Warbuton, J. 2000, *Volunteers and Volunteering*. Sydney: The Federation Press

¹⁶ Haddad, G., Aleksandrovich, N. & Nkowane, C. 2001, Voluntarism: The challenge of recruiting young women as volunteers. *Young Women on the Move* [online], May 2001. Accessed 15 July 2006 at <http://www.worldywca-org.ac.psiweb.com/young_womens/onthemove/yw2001/may/challenge.htm>

Issues affecting women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Cultural differences between the communities researched in the course of the National Survey did not appear to affect how or how much people volunteered. However, organisations wanting to recruit women as volunteers, particularly from newer and emerging communities, do need to be aware of issues specific to a community that could impact on women's ability to volunteer. These include cultural or demographic issues such as:

➤ **Family size**

Women with larger families and/or sole responsibility for childcare and domestic work may have less available time to volunteer, but may also be more restricted in the times of day or night at which they can volunteer.

➤ **Family structure**

In communities where people have arrived as refugees from war and conflict, women may outnumber men and may be the head of the family because husbands have been killed or families have been separated. Women may find themselves in non-traditional roles with additional responsibilities and pressure to find employment.

➤ **Education and literacy**

Women may have had their education interrupted by war or conflict, or may come from countries where women have little or no access to education, with consequences for skills and literacy. On the other hand, women recently arrived in Australia may have a high level of skills and/or educational or professional qualifications which are not formally recognised in Australia and so may not lead to employment.

➤ **Traditions and restrictions around gender**

In some communities, voluntary work may not be acceptable for women. In others, while women may be able to volunteer, it may be less acceptable for them to be directly approached or recruited by people outside their family or by organisations outside their community. Women themselves may also need their husband's or family members' approval before becoming involved in activities outside their community.

➤ **Language skills and cultural knowledge**

In communities where women have less contact with the broader society, for whatever reason, their English language skills and knowledge of Australian culture may be more limited, leading in turn to a much lower level of confidence about engaging with mainstream organisations.



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Learning more about the women you want to recruit will be key to successfully involving them.

RECRUITING WOMEN FROM CALD COMMUNITIES

Module 2 will help you plan and implement a detailed recruitment strategy aimed at culturally diverse volunteers. However, the research findings and the demographic data have implications for what organisations need to do when recruiting women from diverse cultural backgrounds as volunteers.

If you intend to include women from diverse communities in your recruitment drive, or aim your recruitment specifically at women in culturally diverse communities, then you may also need to consider the following issues.

Planning before you start

Successful recruitment needs to be based on forward planning and on concrete information about your own organisation and the communities you want to recruit from.

Before you start, make sure you know:

- why you want to recruit women from a particular community/ies as volunteers
- what you will offer them
- how you will support your new women volunteers and how many you can support at any one time
- what you will ask them to do and how you will train them to do it
- how you will select and induct them
- how you will involve existing staff in the process
- how you will integrate new recruits with existing staff.

Once you know the answers to these questions you can make a case to management addressing why you want to recruit women from a particular community or cultural background, in terms of your organisation's needs and the benefits these volunteers could bring. For instance, you may already be servicing a particular cultural or ethnic community and your women clients will feel more comfortable not just with volunteers from the same cultural background but other women. Alternatively, you may want to grow your organisation by recruiting more inclusively from your local catchment, and women will be more likely to volunteer than men.

This will mean making it clear to management what support women volunteers will need (e.g. flexible hours, help with costs or transport) and what the organisation may need to offer in order to recruit them (for example, training that will increase their employability and language skills, help with obtaining recognition of prior learning) and how the organisation needs to resource this.

Finding out about your target group

Learning more about the women you want to recruit will be key to successfully involving them. Understanding what women from diverse cultural backgrounds will want to gain from their volunteering experience and what problems they may encounter in volunteering is clearly very important.

Module 2 provides tips on how to learn more about and get to know local communities. In relation to women in those communities, you need to consider:

➤ **Age**

Is the community a long-established one with several generations of women whose capacity to volunteer and reasons for volunteering vary? Or do the women mostly fall within one age group with similar issues, e.g. to do with childcare or the need to enter the workforce? Your recruitment strategy needs to take these into account.

➤ **Mobility**

Cultural attitudes to women, knowledge about Australian culture, skills, and English proficiency or literacy can combine to restrict women's mobility. Do women in this community depend on others for transport? Do they readily use public transport? Do they have money to spend on fares? How can you help them get to the volunteer workplace?

➤ **Family and childcare responsibilities**

Is bringing small children with them a condition of being able to volunteer? Can you make this workable for your organisation?

➤ **Confidence and independence**

Women in the communities you are recruiting from may be uncomfortable with volunteering singly and may prefer to volunteer with other women in a group.

➤ **Community attitudes**

Cultural attitudes to women and women's roles and/or to voluntary work may make women feel their volunteering needs community or family approval, and some women may need permission to volunteer. Volunteering may not be well understood and may just be seen as unpaid work, while there may be resistance to women being engaged in work outside the home or immediate community, paid or unpaid.

➤ **Language skills & literacy**

How proficient in English are women across this community likely to be? Are they likely to be literate in their first language(s)? Think about whether English proficiency is important in the volunteering roles that you have available. Can volunteering with your organisation be offered as a way to practise English? Or to improve literacy in English?

➤ **Education**

How varied are the educational levels of women across the target community? Do individual women have particular technical or professional skills that they would like to be able to use and develop in an English-speaking context? Volunteering experiences may give them the chance to have existing qualifications converted or recognised. The levels of education brought by women volunteers may be of value to the organisation.



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See **Module 2** for more detailed information about these differences, and for general promotional strategies and use of ethnic media.

Exploring these issues with women in the target communities will help you understand what might motivate women from particular cultural and language backgrounds to volunteer and what they hope to get from volunteering. This in turn will help you develop volunteering roles that deliver for both the volunteers and your organisation in the long run.

'I work in the Children's section because I been teaching for over thirty years. So I ask the Museum to put me there.' *Cissy Chung, volunteer at Museum Victoria*

Building relationships with women in culturally diverse communities

Getting women from diverse cultural communities interested in volunteering with mainstream not-for-profit organisations also involves gaining their trust and confidence.

There are a number of things not-for profits can do to build relationships with women in CALD communities as they go about developing their understanding of community issues and working out their recruitment strategies.

➤ Find a community guide

This could be a woman from the target community who is already working or volunteering in the community or not-for-profit sectors (e.g. someone working in a Migrant Resource Centre, in refugee support, or in a Volunteer Resource Centre), and who can alert you to key issues and networks.

➤ Tap into women's networks

Initiate face-to-face contact with women's social and service groups by attending meetings or social functions, and invite women from these groups to visit your organisation. This will build an understanding of what your organisation stands for and familiarity with what it does and with the people there.

➤ Create a joint project

A long-term relationship between your organisation and members of a particular community can be kick-started by a joint project which benefits both the organisation and the community as a whole. A project which involves volunteers makes it easy for women to volunteer in a group, which they may be more willing to do, and also gives the community an investment in your organisation.

Recruitment campaigning

The National Survey of volunteers from culturally diverse backgrounds did find differences between cultural communities in how volunteers had been recruited and which promotional channels worked best. Community newspapers and print media were more important sources of information in some communities, while radio and community organisations were more important in others. For all communities, however, word-of-mouth was the primary way people had been recruited, underlining the importance for not-for-profits of networking and having a strong community presence.

In addition to any differences based on culture, women's media preferences and access to information will also be shaped by their literacy in both their community language and English, by whether they are working or at home full-time, and whether they move much outside their immediate community.

Women who are home-based and/or have low literacy will be more reliant on ethnic/community radio and community networks and services (e.g. maternal and child and health centres, playgroups, schools, retirees' clubs, ethno-specific service organisations). For women who will make use of printed material but are also home-based, shopping centres, supermarkets, local libraries, and community centres are good places to distribute brochures, posters and handbills.

10 QUICK TIPS FOR INVOLVING WOMEN FROM DIVERSE CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS IN YOUR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

1. Make contact with local ethnic and ethnic women's organisations to gauge interest.

Local ethnic organisations are generally closely connected with the community they represent. It is likely they will be able to direct you to potential volunteers, or at least advise you on the best way to connect with your target market. Check out the Federation of Ethnic Communities Council website, www.fecca.org.au, for ethnic peak bodies in your state.

2. Recruit a woman volunteer or group of volunteers from a CALD background to help you develop a CALD volunteering strategy for your organisation.

They will have valuable knowledge about the most effective ways to reach potential volunteers in their community. They may even be able to tap into their local networks to help recruit new volunteers for you.

3. Speak with your local council to determine local demographics, and produce volunteer recruitment materials and advertisements in the three most commonly spoken languages.

Your local council should have access to detailed local demographics and will be able to advise you on the major ethnic groups in your area. Having your materials written in the top three languages spoken in your area will maximise your chances of communicating effectively with your target market.

4. Go out into the community to recruit new volunteers.

Go to places where women from CALD backgrounds are likely to spend time, such as local shopping centres, community centres, child care centres, schools, sporting clubs, ethnic organisations, etc.

5. Advertise your volunteer roles in local ethnic community newspapers and on local radio.

Advertising roles for which you would like to attract volunteers from CALD backgrounds in local ethnic media is a fast, easy and cost effective way to directly reach your target audience.

6. Word volunteer advertisements in a way that appeals to women from CALD backgrounds.

For example, women from CALD backgrounds express interest in learning new skills, meeting new people from different cultures, learning about Australian workplaces, and gaining workplace experience. Include some of these terms in your ads. Make it clear that you think women have a special and valuable contribution to make.

Recognise that women from CALD backgrounds may need more support than mainstream volunteers, particularly during orientation.

7. Ensure that paid staff working on your volunteer program are culturally sensitive.

This could mean they a) are from a CALD background, b) have had experience managing people from CALD backgrounds in a previous role, or c) have training in working with people from CALD backgrounds.

8. Allocate additional time and resources to support women from CALD backgrounds in your volunteer program.

Recognise that women from CALD backgrounds may need more support than mainstream volunteers, particularly during orientation. Make sure you plan ahead and have sufficient time and resources allocated to meet this need.

9. Recruit influential advocates to support your initiative.

Approach key internal personnel and external experts or key clients to help you gain buy-in and support for the initiative. Keep your eye on local media to spot people in the community who may be able to give support and assistance to your volunteering program.

10. Set Key Performance Indicators for Volunteer Managers relating to the number of people from CALD backgrounds in their program.

This will ensure that recruiting people from CALD backgrounds is a priority for them and will help steer the program in the direction you want it to go.

RESOURCES

Women's organisations with a national or national CALD focus

For a list of peak CALD community organisations that can also direct you to women's organisations at the regional or local level, see the Resources at the end of Module 2.

National Council of Women of Australia (NCWA)

T: 02 6285 2337

F: 02 6282 7191

E: ncwa@bigpond.com.au

W: ncwa.org.au

National Foundation for Australian Women (NFAW)

T: 02 4422 2208

F: 02 4422 3878

E: nfaw@nfaw.org

W: www.nfaw.org

Australian National Committee on Refugee Women (ANCORW)

T: 02 9385 1961

F: 02 9662 8991

E: ancorw@ancorw.org

W: www.ancorw.org/

Muslim Women's National Network of Australia, Inc. (MWNNA Inc.)

E: info@mwnna.org.au

W: www.mwnna.org.au

Keep your eye on local media to spot people in the community who may be able to support and assist your volunteering program.

National Council of Jewish Women of Australia
W: www.ncjw.org.au

Australia Donna (Italian women's network)
W: www.australiadonna.on.net

Women's Interfaith Network
W: www.fecca.org.au/Interfaith/index.html

Australian Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer Multicultural Council
W: www.agmc.org.au
E: contact@agmc.org.au

Women's state organisations with a CALD focus

WomenSpeak Network
T: 02 6230 5150
E: womenspeak@ywca.org.au
W: www.ywca.org.au/projects/womenspeak/

Association of Non-English Speaking Background Women of Australia (1987 -)
W: www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/AWE2118b.htm

Victorian Immigrant and Refugee Women's Coalition
T: 03 9654 1249
E: virwc@virwc.org.au
W: www.virwc.org.au

(Lists 58 organisational members/ women's groups in Victoria, Australia and internationally at www.virwc.org.au/links/memberslinks/index.php)

Islamic Women's Welfare Council of Victoria
T: 03 9481 3000
W: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~iwwcv/>

Immigrant Women's Speakout Association NSW
T: 02 9635-8022
F: 02 9635-8176
E: women@speakout.org.au
W: www.speakout.org.au/

Migrant Women's Lobby Group of South Australia (site also carries links)
W: www.nanou.com.au/MWLG/

The directories of the state government departments and commissions listed in the Resources for Module 2 may also list women's groups at state level.



module 4

Recruiting young muslims as volunteers

This Module deals with recruiting young Muslims into your volunteer program. The Module will be most useful if used in conjunction with:

- **Module 1** which puts CALD communities and volunteering in Australia into context

- **Module 2** which deals with recruitment and pre-recruitment planning

- **Module 5** which offers best practice strategies for involving volunteers from diverse backgrounds.

How we learned about young Muslims and volunteering

Module 4 draws on research into young Muslims' experiences of and attitudes towards volunteering, carried out by ORIMA Research for Volunteering Australia and the Australian Multicultural Foundation.

The research was conducted with young Muslim men and women, as well as representatives of not-for-profit organisations, through eight focus groups in Melbourne, Shepparton (Vic) and Lakemba (Sydney) in 2006.

The research is available from the Volunteering Australia website at www.volunteeringaustralia.org >Research.

Q: WHY TARGET YOUNG MUSLIMS FOR YOUR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM?

Many organisations feel that they should be open to anyone who wants to volunteer, and do not set out to target any single group as potential volunteers. But working out what a particular section of our population can offer and then framing a campaign to attract members of that group can lead to a higher overall success rate in recruitment. In considering whether to be proactive about recruiting young people from Muslim families and communities, consider the following facts.

Some facts about young Muslim Australians

Did you know that...

- Muslim Australians are most likely to come from...Australia? (36.4% of Muslim Australians were born in Australia.)
- over one third of Australia's Muslim population was under 25 in 2001?
- over 85% of the Muslims born in Australia were under 25 in 2001?

A fact about Islam

Islamic values are compatible with and supportive of volunteering, which sits comfortably alongside the Islamic tradition of charity and aid to one's neighbours and people in need, without recognition or reward for oneself. Many Muslims are brought up to believe they have a spiritual duty to help others less fortunate than themselves in practical and material ways.

Young Muslims who took part in the ORIMA research (see panel, left) came from a range of cultural backgrounds but believed that volunteering/voluntary community effort is a significant part of being a good member of one's community.

'A central message of the Centre is, "If you want to know God, then you've got to help other people." ' Mohammed El-Botaty, 30-year-old volunteer with the al-Ghazzali Centre in Sydney

A fact about Australia today

The intensifying and often negative spotlight on Islam in response to global events has had a strong impact on young Muslims in Australia. Coming from backgrounds which are broadly supportive of voluntary community effort, many young Muslims are now also motivated to volunteer because they believe it will give them a chance to

- show that they can make a positive contribution to Australian society
- create a positive awareness and understanding of Muslim cultures and beliefs
- build social cohesion in Australia across diverse groups.¹⁷

At the same time, fear of being isolated, harassed or discriminated against makes some hesitant about volunteering with mainstream organisations.

¹⁷ ORIMA Research 2007, *Research about Muslim Youth's Experiences of and Attitudes towards Volunteering*, Melbourne: Volunteering Australia

Recruiting young people from Muslim communities into volunteer roles with mainstream organisations gives them an opportunity to contribute to the broader society in a way that supports rather than antagonises personal Muslim values and identity.

A: IT'S A WIN-WIN SITUATION.

What these facts point to is a group of young people who already value voluntary effort and who are not only motivated to volunteer in the current climate but are also likely to be committed to making a success of volunteering, given an accepting and supportive organisation. Actively recruiting people who are already motivated and committed can only benefit your organisation.

At the same time, recruiting young people from Muslim communities into volunteer roles with mainstream organisations gives them an opportunity to contribute to the broader society in a way that supports rather than antagonises personal Muslim values and identity. And it offers young people – tomorrow's leaders – an active role in the process of building links and understanding between Muslim and non-Muslim Australians.

Volunteering identified as assisting young Muslims

In December 2005, the young people at the National Youth Muslim Summit came up with some practical solutions to the issues of identity, relationships, employment, education and training, and discrimination which they face as young Muslims. Some of the solutions they proposed could be put in place through the not-for-profit sector engaging with young Muslims as volunteers:

The perceived conflict between Muslim and Australian identity

- Grass roots communication between Muslims and non-Muslims through social groups, sporting groups, activities, camps etc.
- Programs and activities that increase the self-esteem of young Australians so they feel confident about their identity.

Belonging versus marginalisation

- Improve Muslim representation in politics, public service and community service organisations
- Promote the duty of community service volunteerism among young Muslim Australians so that they continue to engage in the wider community.

See Summit communiqué in *Building on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security: An Action Plan by the Muslim Community Reference Group*, September 2006.¹⁸

Benefits to organisations

The obvious benefits to organisations of involving young people from Muslim communities are twofold. The first is that, like other volunteers from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds, they bring to the organisation networks and knowledge about their home communities, which may be increasingly important to the organisation's success and longevity, and they increase their own community's understanding of and goodwill towards the organisation. The second set of benefits is shared with other young volunteers, who bring new skills, energies and perspectives to an organisation, helping it move forward into the future.

¹⁸ Accessed May 2007 at <http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/a-diverse-australia/communities/muslim-community/MCRG/mcrg_report.pdf>

Participation by young Muslims in not-for-profits in the wider community can add to understanding and tolerance of Muslim culture and values within our society.

Benefits to Muslim communities

Participation by young Muslims in not-for-profits rooted in the wider community can add to understanding and tolerance of Muslim culture and values within our society.

WHAT OUR RESEARCH FOUND

Young Muslims do a wide range of volunteer work

The young people who participated in the research had volunteered across almost all not-for-profit sectors (emergency services was a possible exception) and via both Muslim and non-Muslim organisations, providing services both within and outside Muslim communities.

What they know about volunteering

Many of the young people in the research groups were more familiar with community-based informal volunteering than with more structured, formal volunteering in mainstream not-for-profits. This was partly by choice but also because they had much less access to information about formal volunteering opportunities.

The support and approval of families is very important

While Islam encourages charity and voluntary work, having parents' or a spouse's approval and support for their voluntary work can be a critical factor in participation. Issues that can cause families concern include:

- **women working at night**, which can be seen as unsafe and/or as encroaching on family time;
- **giving volunteering priority** over study, paid work or the search for work, especially, but not solely, for young men;
- volunteering activities that could be seen as **politically dangerous or inappropriate**.

Gender is reflected in their volunteering choices

Among our research participants, young women tended to have more volunteering experience than young men, both inside and outside Muslim organisations, and to have pursued volunteering more proactively.

Young men were less likely to have looked for volunteering roles, and were likely instead to have volunteered in response to direct requests for assistance. As the more proactive group, the young women also knew more about and had more involvement with non-Muslim organisations than the young men.

The types of work they did also divided on gender lines, with young women more engaged in community welfare work and young men doing more physical and outdoor work (e.g. sports-based and maintenance activities).

Recruitment messages aimed at young Muslims may therefore need to be different for young men and young women.

Most of the young people in the research indicated they did not want to be singled out as 'special' or 'different' or the token Muslim.

What discourages young Muslims from volunteering

The things that these young people said prevented or discouraged them from volunteering included the common barriers of lack of time due to other commitments; cost (e.g. travel); family commitments; and lack of recognition.

However, barriers perhaps more specific to this group were:

- lack of family support and encouragement;
- lack of information about available volunteering opportunities, and about how they could help;
- a fear of being isolated, or of being exposed to unfamiliar surroundings, issues and people; and
- their perception that some volunteering activities did not directly help people (e.g. admin roles) and so were not worthwhile. (This reflects the Islamic focus on direct practical aid, but could also be a view shared by young people generally.)

'Everything we do, from feeding the homeless to tree planting, is practical.'
Jenna Joyan, volunteer at the al-Ghazzali Centre in Sydney

What motivates young Muslims to volunteer

Broadly, the research participants were motivated by the same things as many other young volunteers: 'making a difference' to others in the community; job satisfaction; meeting new people and extending their social life; increasing their employment skills and exploring career paths.

'I'm involved with a bunch of people who really believe in what they're doing and they're doing it with so much love and dedication, and you know you can't force anybody to bring that into any sort of organisation. Everybody brings this willingly and this means it's so much fun.' Jenna Joyan, volunteer with the al-Ghazzali Centre

Also important to this group were personal (spiritual) development and, as noted earlier, the chance to be a positive example of Muslim youth and an ambassador for Muslim communities.

What young Muslims are looking for

Most of the young people in the research indicated they did not want to be singled out as 'special' or 'different' or the token Muslim. They would be more likely to volunteer for non-Muslim organisations which demonstrated a strong commitment to diversity in their volunteer workforce than for those which did not, because this would indicate a greater acceptance of people from **all** backgrounds.

Is it practical for your organisation to target young Muslims?

If your organisation wants to focus on recruiting young Muslims as volunteers, you need to learn more about Muslim communities and take into account where the main Muslim communities are.

See *Learning more about Muslim communities* later in this Module.

REACHING YOUNG MUSLIMS

Recruitment basics

Before you launch into an advertising/recruitment campaign it is important to do some planning and to gather some key information about your target group.

If you are recruiting from a particular community, then try to find out whether/how much its young people are employed, what types of work experience they've had and what standard of education they have generally reached. It could be important to offer volunteering opportunities that will allow young people to build on their training and work experiences; it could also be important to offer them roles and tasks that their parents or communities generally think are suitable, particularly with respect to gender.

As well as offering volunteering roles that will match young Muslims' likely motivations and expectations (outlined earlier), there are other things you can do to make it easier for them to get involved in your organisation. These could include being able to volunteer with a friend or group of friends, being given some assistance with transport or transport costs, or having a meal provided.

It's also important to be able to show understanding and support in the volunteer workplace for Muslim values and cultural practices. This could include:

- respecting rules about no male-female physical contact (e.g. handshakes) and not setting young men and women up in close working arrangements;
- providing time and place for prayers, which are required five times a day;
- not expecting them to drink alcohol and not pressuring them to attend social events involving alcohol;
- allowing women certain forms of dress, such as headscarves; and
- being aware of and planning around fasting practices and dietary requirements.

The planning process that supports recruitment is covered in more detail in Module 2 – Recruitment. In summary, you need to work out:

- what roles you want/are able to offer any new recruits from your target group,
- what skills or attributes you are looking for in them,
- what you can offer them through their volunteering experience, and
- how many recruits you can take on at a time and how you will support them, so that their experience is positive and they are likely to stay long-term.

Key messages

The research has shown that your recruitment messages need to be aimed at both young people and the older people in Muslim communities who influence their decision making, be they parents or community leaders. Promotional material aimed at this dual audience will be more effective if it is in the relevant community languages as well as in English.

As the concept of 'volunteering' is not always well understood, you may also need to use terms like 'charity' and 'community work' and 'giving time to help others'.

In your recruitment messages, build on the factors that already motivate young Muslims to volunteer, and tackle in a positive way the issues that could be putting them off (such as fear of discrimination or cost). For example:



© iStockphoto.com/naheed choudhry/naheedence

➤ **Volunteering has personal benefits, volunteering is enjoyable**

Young people who volunteer with us build on their education in a practical way and gain work experience; they learn completely new skills; they meet new people and extend their social life; they gain a sense of achievement.

➤ **Volunteering benefits our society**

Young volunteers are helping other people, not just themselves, and can make a difference to our society.

➤ **Volunteering benefits the Muslim community**

Young Muslims who volunteer help build a positive image of Islam in our society and help other Australians understand more about Islam.

➤ **Volunteer organisations value and support their volunteers**

Our organisation depends on volunteers, so we work hard to make sure our volunteers enjoy their work and feel valued.

➤ **Volunteering can be organised to suit volunteers**

Our volunteers can decide how much and when they volunteer. And they can often receive help with out-of-pocket expenses such as fares or petrol.

➤ **Volunteering is for everybody**

Our organisation wants to involve people from the whole community, regardless of age, gender, religion or background. We respect the needs and values of different cultural groups.

Key communication channels

The National Survey of culturally diverse volunteers which surveyed an older group of volunteers from Arabic-speaking communities found that they were most likely to have been recruited by friends and family or through community organisations (i.e. by word of mouth and personal contact) but it also showed that there was a relatively high use of print and other media to recruit volunteers in Arabic-speaking communities compared to other language communities.¹⁹ (Note that although not all Arabic-speakers are Muslim, the only language group in the survey likely to have included Muslims were the Arabic-speakers.)

The not-for-profits which participated in the ORIMA research into young Muslim volunteers said that they sourced their young volunteers through local newspapers, religious organisations, their own websites, libraries, Job Network and Centrelink, community leaders and community radio.²⁰

When young people are the focus of recruitment, the need to gain family and community approval for their volunteering probably favours the use of community organisations, religious organisations, community leaders, community radio, and local newspaper ads and articles in community languages as the primary channels to use in your recruitment campaign.

¹⁹ Australian Multicultural Foundation & Volunteering Australia 2007, *National Survey of Volunteers from Diverse Cultural and Linguistic Backgrounds*, Melbourne: Volunteering Australia

²⁰ ORIMA Research 2007, *Research about Muslim Youth's Experiences of and Attitudes towards Volunteering*, Melbourne: Volunteering Australia

'Being Muslim' is not an ethnicity nor does it necessarily mean you speak Arabic. Muslims have come to Australia from over 120 countries.

LEARNING MORE ABOUT AUSTRALIA'S MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

Muslims account for 1.5% of the Australian population and are culturally and linguistically diverse.

Birthplaces and languages

'Being Muslim' is not an ethnicity nor does it necessarily mean you speak Arabic. Muslims have come to Australia from over 120 countries. While Australia is where the largest number were born (36.4% in 2001), the other main countries of origin and the percentage they have contributed to the Muslim population in Australia are:

Lebanon	10.4%	Indonesia	2.9%
Turkey	8.3%	Iraq	2.8%
Afghanistan	3.5%	Bangladesh	2.7%
Bosnia-Herzegovina	3.5%	Iran	2.3%
Pakistan	3.3%		

Source: ABS Census 2001

However, not all people born in these countries are Muslim, nor do immigrants from each country necessarily have the same ethnic background, or speak the same first/home language.

Australians born in...	% Muslim	Australians born in...	% Muslim
Turkey	8.3%	Iraq	2.8%
Afghanistan	3.5%	Bangladesh	2.7%
Bosnia-Herzegovina	3.5%	Iran	2.3%
Pakistan	3.3%		

Source: ABS Census 2001

Over three-quarters of Muslim Australians speak only English at home (11.3%) OR speak it well. Of those who speak another language at home a little over one-third speak Arabic (including Lebanese), 16.3% speak Turkish, 5.8% Persian, 4.3% Bosnian, and 4.2% Urdu.

For more information on particular communities, including their settlement history, go to www.immi.gov.au and select Living in Australia> A Diverse Australia>Strengthening Communities> Community Information Summaries

Where Muslim Australians live

Around 50% of all Muslim Australians live in New South Wales and around 33% in Victoria. Western Australia has the next highest concentration, at around 7%.²¹ (The situation is slightly different for three overseas-born communities: the proportion of people born in Lebanon is highest in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia; and of people born in Turkey and in Bosnia-Herzegovina is highest in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland.)

²¹ ABS 2001, *Census of Population and Housing*

Need more information?

For more information on Australian diversity and on volunteering by people from diverse cultural and language backgrounds, see

Module 1 – The Facts.

For advice on how to research and network with local CALD communities, see *Finding out about CALD communities* in **Module 2 – Recruitment.**

Most overseas-born Australians live in a capital city (80% in 2001), and over half in either Sydney or Melbourne. These figures are even higher for recent arrivals and for young people within immigrant communities.²² In addition, particular communities tend to be concentrated in particular local government areas.

Young people within Muslim communities

Almost half of Australia's Muslim population, and over 80% of Australia-born Muslims, were under 25 years of age in 2001. In comparison, 34.5% of the total Australian population were under 25 in 2001.

Australians born in...	% under 25 in their community
Afghanistan	41.2%
Indonesia	40.3%
Bangladesh	30.9%
Pakistan	30.2%
Iraq	30.0%
Bosnia	29.2%
Turkey	12.4%
Lebanon	11.1%

Engaging with young Muslims therefore means engaging with a numerically significant segment of their communities.

Getting to know Muslim communities

Since young people in Muslim communities value and may also need parental and community approval and support for their activities, especially activities in the wider community, it is important for organisations which want to involve young people to be open, visible and to gain community confidence. This can often be done by establishing contact with community organisations and with respected leaders and older people in the particular Muslim organisation or community.

There are many organisations operating in and across Islamic communities, some with a cultural/educational, religious or welfare focus, others representing a particular ethnic group or demographic (e.g. women or young people), some a combination of the two. Most will be members of the Islamic Council operating in each state and territory and these in turn are members of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC). The AFIC website <<http://www.afic.com.au>> carries a listing of its State Council members and their members. Some Islamic community organisations may also be members of the Ethnic Communities Council within their state. For a listing of these, see Resources in Module 2 – Recruitment.

²² ABS 2004, *Australian Social Trends, 2004: Where do the overseas-born population live?* Cat. No. 4102.0

Young people in Muslim communities value parental and community approval and support for their activities. So organisations which want to involve young people need to be open and visible and gain community confidence.

RESOURCES

Community profiles

Go to www.immi.gov.au
Choose Living in Australia> A Diverse Australia>Strengthening Communities> Community information Summaries

Youth Summit Communiqué

Go to www.immi.gov.au
Choose Living in Australia> A Diverse Australia>Strengthening Communities> Muslim Community Engagement>Muslim Community Reference Group> Report

Australia Federation of Islamic Councils (National peak body of State Islamic Councils)

<http://www.afic.com.au>

The AFIC website also lists contact details of Islamic religious, welfare and community organisations in NSW, and separately lists the State Islamic Councils (AFIC members) and their member community and welfare organisations

Basic information about Islam

From the Federation of Islamic Councils at <http://www.afic.com.au/apislam.htm#Introduction>

From The Islamic Women's Welfare Council of Victoria

Media Guide: Islam and Muslims in Australia (in PDF)

http://home.vicnet.net.au/~iwwcv/IWWC_media_guide.pdf

Lists of mosques and Islamic schools in Australia

<http://www.afic.com.au/smNSW.htm>

Mosques often serve a particular ethnic community.



module 5

Best practice strategies

This Module offers strategies for dealing with language and communication problems, and for managing volunteers from diverse backgrounds effectively and in line with best practice as set out in the National Standards for Involving Volunteers in Not for Profit Organisations. Best practice is illustrated with a range of scenarios and real-life volunteer recruitment stories.

COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY ACROSS LANGUAGE BARRIERS

'Difficulties with language' is one of the main reasons mainstream organisations say they do not actively recruit people of CALD background as volunteers. Yet volunteers who responded to the National Survey in 2004–2005 said that limited English is less of a barrier to their involvement than time, or family commitments, or cost.²³

There are many things organisations can do to communicate effectively across language barriers, and most of them sit within 'best practice' in volunteer management – that is, they will contribute to more effective communication across your organisation generally, and will benefit **all** your volunteers.

Basic strategies

These strategies will work best if they are adopted across the organisation. Try to build others' commitment to communicating effectively with volunteers of diverse language backgrounds by encouraging all staff to see limited English skills as a challenge and a learning opportunity (for all) rather than as a barrier. Encourage existing volunteers and paid staff to see communication difficulties not as the personal problem of the non-English speaker but as a shared problem that everyone can help overcome. Developing this kind of ethos can be one goal of cross-cultural communication training.

²³ Australian Multicultural Foundation & Volunteering Australia 2007, *National Survey of Australian Volunteers from Diverse Cultural and Language Backgrounds*, Melbourne: Volunteering Australia

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Avoid acronyms and jargon – they assume a lot of prior knowledge.

➤ **Use simple, direct, concrete language.**

People learning a new language start with a small number of basic all-purpose words and then build on that. Simplify how you phrase things and play to the person's strengths by using the words they are most likely to already know.

Example: 'Can you please help me with...?' is easier to understand than 'I wonder if you would mind helping me with...?'

Avoid acronyms and jargon because they assume a lot of prior knowledge – this applies to all new recruits, not just those of CALD background.

➤ **Show as well as explain – then seek confirmation.**

Walk as well as talk people through work routines and procedures, then get them to show you what you have shown them. Avoid getting just 'Yes' or 'No' answers to questions about whether they have understood. Make sure that they have, especially when it involves physical safety or duty of care to clients and/or the public.

➤ **Work out alternatives and back-ups to written communication.**

Even people whose spoken English is adequate may not be able to read English; they may not be literate in their own language or they may be unfamiliar with English script.

Think about key bits of information for volunteers that are placed on notice boards or in pigeon holes, such as rosters, meeting notices, warnings, telephone messages, invitations, and make sure that these also get passed on face-to-face; this could be built into daily or weekly team meetings, or into a particular job, e.g. reception. If you have a buddy system, it could be part of the buddy's job to help with reading and writing tasks, such as checking the notice board and writing OH&S or client visit reports.

➤ **Limit written communication (forms and paperwork) to the essentials.**

This means reviewing and hopefully streamlining and cutting down on paperwork – something everyone will thank you for. Look at the writing you ask volunteers to do or the written information you provide them with, make sure it's needed, and eliminate duplications and overlaps.

Workplace strategies

'On the job' is an ideal place to acquire, develop and practise new language skills. Volunteers whose involvement is limited at the beginning by poor English will not be permanently limited in this way given the right support and opportunities for learning and practising English. The time and energy invested by an organisation in providing these opportunities will pay off.

➤ **Work out exactly when and where volunteers need to be able to speak good English – for their own and clients' welfare and safety – and design roles and allocate tasks accordingly.**

People need opportunities to acquire and practise new language skills but, as with any new skill, they need to do this in a low-risk environment, where the effect of getting things wrong does not have a highly negative impact for them or the organisation. Giving them the right tasks is important.

Training can be directed at building communication and language skills but it can also provide opportunities for developing these even when it is focussed on other skills and knowledge.

- **Use working partners and team structures to build language skills.**
Partnering a new volunteer who has limited or basic English with a buddy, or putting them in a team, is an ideal way to support them so that they can develop English skills while making a contribution. For this to work, the buddy or team members need to actively contribute to the process, so choosing the right team members and briefing them will be important.

- **Identify opportunities in workplace routines and roles that will help build language skills.**
For example, volunteers with limited English could benefit from roles that involve a lot of communication and interaction with others while having low-risk tasks and processes. Meetings and social gatherings also provide opportunities for structured interactions that require people to talk.

'We get a lot of overseas students with limited English who really want to work in front of house. We see their English come along incredibly because of the kind of communication that they're undertaking.' Jane Humphrys, Manager, Volunteer Program, Museum Victoria

Training strategies

Training can be directed at building communication and language skills but it can also provide opportunities for developing these even when it is focussed on other skills and knowledge.

- **Brief contracted trainers about the English proficiency of volunteers before training starts.**
Training activities can be designed and delivered to take account of the needs of people with low English proficiency and to maximise their participation.

- **Provide cross-cultural communication training for all staff.**
As well as giving people basic information about key cultural differences, this type of training can develop people's capacity to recognise and deal constructively with communication problems.

- **Consider offering or facilitating English as a Second Language (ESL) training for volunteers.**
This could be done in partnership with or through another community organisation. Formal ESL training is available through the TAFE network but also through organisations such as AMES, Migrant Resource Centres and, for new arrivals with no functional English, through the network of Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) providers. (For more information about AMEP, go to www.immi.gov.au Choose Living in Australia>Help with English> Learn English.)

Free safety posters in community languages

The SafeWork South Australia website has a number of posters which can be downloaded in PDF giving explanations of common safety signs in a range of community languages. Go to:

<http://www.safework.sa.gov.au/contentPages/docs/aeWorkSafetySignsPoster.pdf>

<http://www.safework.sa.gov.au/contentPages/docs/aeSafetySignsx5.pdf>

Documents & signage

- **Put your policies and written procedures into plain English.**
Making your policy and procedural documents easier to understand will benefit everyone in the organisation.

- **Use images (pictographs) as well as written instructions to convey key messages, especially to do with safety.**
This is a cost-effective way of reaching multiple language groups but also helps English-speakers with low literacy.

- **Consider translating important documents into languages appropriate for your volunteers.**
Identify which are the key policies and procedures from the new volunteer's point of view: these will vary across organisations but will usually include safety procedures, 'do's and don'ts' of the work routine, and volunteers' rights and responsibilities.

- **Use trained interpreters and translators for key tasks.**
Translating and interpreting are highly specialised skills, requiring in-depth knowledge of both source and target languages, and the related cultures. **Avoid** relying on bilingual volunteer or paid staff to translate key documents for the organisation or to interpret for clients in key situations, e.g. when assessing needs or eligibility for services.

What do we mean by 'plain English'?

'Identify the staff members for whom the planned training would be an appropriate development opportunity, and specify dates and times at which they can attend.'

This is not plain English but it is an example of the kind of language you often find in organisational documents. A much easier and clearer (plain English) way to say this would be:

'Find out who needs training and when they can come.'

You will find a useful guide to what 'plain English' means and how to adopt it across your organisation at www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training_skills/publications_resources/plain_english_at_work

'We're put in different groups and we discuss such and such a thing and all. They use the big words, so big words. It's even bigger than my name, longer than my name you know. I'm sure there must be also simple words that explain things, shorter words!' Tagi Faanaana, community rep on a state government Task Force

Use professionals to translate key documents for the organisation or to interpret for clients in key situations.

Using accredited interpreters and translators

Professionally trained and accredited translators (for written documents) or interpreters (for speech) will:

- work to professional standards of accuracy and reliability, based on formal training
- offer professional indemnity
- be bound by the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT) Code of Ethics, e.g. in relation to confidentiality and privacy.

NAATI (National Accreditation Authority for translators and Interpreters) accreditation is the only officially accepted credential for interpreters and translators in Australia. However, not all community languages are covered yet by NAATI accreditation standards. For more information and for an online interpreter/translator directory go to www.naati.com.au

The **National Telephone Interpreter Service (TIS)** 131 450 is a government-funded service which offers free interpreting services **to certain clients and in certain circumstances only**. Otherwise a fee is charged. Go to www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/help-with-english for guidelines and more information.

Resources

AMES (Adult Migrant Education Service) at <http://www.ames.net.au> is a not-for-profit organisation that provides a range of services and training (including **Workplace English Literacy and language (WELL)** training) both to individual migrants and to organisations supporting or employing migrants.

The **'Diversity – A Way of Life' Training Kit** is available for trainers to download and use free of charge in accordance with stated copyright and licence conditions from <http://www.diversityaustralia.gov.au/training/index.htm>. The Kit consists of 4 components and has 4 content modules. It is aimed at middle level/line managers and supervisors, and has been designed to cater for a number of skill competencies in diversity management, from beginners to intermediate and advanced levels.

Cross-cultural trainers and training materials (from for-profit, not-for-profit and government organisations) can be found on the internet. Search on terms such as <cross-cultural training> and <diversity training>

Not-for-profit diversity management training providers include:
Diversity@Work at <http://www.diversityatwork.com.au>

Migrant Resource Centres may also offer or advise on where to source cross-cultural training and cross-cultural communication training.

For more information about the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) go to www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/help-with-english

SUPPORTING YOUR VOLUNTEERS FROM CALD BACKGROUNDS WITH BEST PRACTICE

The National Standards describe what elements should be part of a 'best practice' approach to managing volunteers. This Module builds on these elements by providing practical advice on integrating volunteers of CALD backgrounds into your volunteer program in line with each of the eight National Standards:

1. Policies and procedures
2. Management responsibilities
3. Recruitment
4. Work and the workplace
5. Training and development
6. Service delivery
7. Documentation and records
8. Continuous improvement

Volunteering Australia recommends that all volunteer-involving organisations familiarise themselves with the National Standards and aim for best practice in their programs as much as possible. The National Standards are available from Volunteering Australia by visiting www.volunteeringaustralia.org or calling (03) 9820 4100.

Standard 1. Policies and procedures

An organisation that involves volunteers shall define and document its policies and procedures for volunteer involvement and ensure that these are understood, implemented and maintained at all levels of the organisation where volunteers are involved.

Once you have obtained management support, strategies relating to volunteers of diverse cultural and language backgrounds should be built into your policies and strategic plans. It is important to incorporate diversity into your organisational documents so it becomes an accepted part of organisational culture and practice.

Following are some strategies to help you formulate appropriate policies and procedures for incorporating volunteers from CALD backgrounds into your program:

- **Recruit the assistance of a person from a CALD background to give advice.** It is always helpful to get the advice of your target market to give you an insight into their attitudes and needs.
- **Include general statements about valuing diversity and about your organisation's commitment to providing the resources needed to support diversity.** Rather than talking specifically about involving volunteers from culturally diverse backgrounds, it may be more useful to work general diversity statements into your organisational documents to help it become part of normal business practice.
- **Policy should relate to diversity in general, rather than be culturally specific.** As the needs and sensitivities of different cultures can vary enormously, it is worthwhile keeping policies relating to diversity generic and adaptable.



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Make effective diversity management a key responsibility of paid staff.

- **Policies and procedures should be evolving documents that are reviewed and updated on a regular basis.** As issues and gaps in your policies arise, these should be updated to ensure they remain relevant and useful to the organisation.
- **Involve paid and volunteer staff in the process of developing and reviewing policies and procedures.** Formal review processes involving all staff and informal mechanisms for them to provide feedback will help keep policies relevant, and will ensure that procedures are workable and meet the needs of a diverse workforce. Volunteers' involvement in this process also helps ensure that policies and procedures are understood and followed. Make the review process a 'live', verbal one, not a written one, so that you can be sure that volunteers of CALD backgrounds a) understand the policies and b) have some input.

Standard 2. Management responsibility

An organisation that involves volunteers shall ensure that volunteers are managed within a defined system and by capable personnel with the authority and resources to achieve the organisation's policy goals.

Proper management of volunteers is an essential component of any effective volunteer program.

Appointing staff with appropriate credentials to manage your volunteers of CALD background and giving them access to specialist resources will ensure that your volunteers are sufficiently supported in their work. Some suggestions that may be helpful when creating or reviewing your volunteer management strategy:

- **Ensure that paid staff working on your volunteer program are culturally sensitive.** This could mean they a) are from a CALD background, b) have had experience managing people from CALD backgrounds in a previous role, or c) have training in working with people from CALD backgrounds.
- **Include as a key responsibility in position descriptions for paid staff the need to achieve a volunteering program that reflects the diversity of the local community.**
- **Organise for staff and volunteers to participate in cross-cultural training.** This will increase their understanding of the similarities and differences between cultures and help them communicate and work effectively with people from CALD backgrounds.
- **Allocate additional time and resources to support volunteers of CALD background.** Recognise that volunteers from CALD backgrounds may need more or different support than other volunteers, particularly during orientation, either because of language difficulties or for cultural reasons. Make sure you plan ahead and allocate sufficient time and resources to this need.
- **Identify specialist external resources or services that will help you support volunteers of CALD background.** Build your managers' capacity to respond to the needs of volunteers from diverse backgrounds by establishing organisational relationships with, for example, interpreting services, bilingual or cross-cultural trainers and communication specialists, and community support organisations within local CALD communities.

People who want to volunteer with your organisation need to understand what you are looking for and what is involved in recruitment and selection.

Standard 3. Recruitment and selection

An organisation that involves volunteers shall plan and have clearly documented volunteer recruitment, selection and orientation policies and procedures that are consistent with non-discriminatory practices and guidelines.

Volunteer recruitment is rated as the most pressing concern by managers of volunteers. People who want to volunteer with your organisation need to understand what you are looking for and what is involved in recruitment and selection. They also need to feel confident that these processes will be fair and non-discriminatory. This is particularly important for volunteers from diverse cultural or language backgrounds.

'I guess the general stereotype in the community is that we're all bronzed, fit, white, blue-eyed, blond-haired surf life savers. This perception is a very visual barrier to participation.' *Chris Giles, National Development Manager, Surf Life Saving Australia*

- **Make sure that your approach to recruitment and selection is non-discriminatory.** Your volunteer program should be open to volunteers of all backgrounds, but at the same time it is important to choose individuals on their merits. Avoid recruiting 'token' volunteers. All volunteers need to feel the organisation is more interested in what they can offer as individuals than in their gender, age or background.

- **Review and update volunteer position descriptions regularly.** Make sure position descriptions are written in simple English. Ask current volunteers to tell you how their roles are evolving and how the position descriptions might need to be updated. Make sure that position descriptions do not unnecessarily exclude applicants from CALD backgrounds by asking for skills that are not really needed (e.g. culturally specific knowledge or English literacy skills).

- **Produce community language versions of key material.** Consider printing and/or putting on your website a clear, single-page outline of available volunteer roles and your recruitment and selection process in the language of your target group or in two or three of the languages-other-than-English most used in your community. If your organisation requires police checks of volunteers, make sure that you include a clear non-threatening explanation of why these are needed.

- **Use plain English in all written material, but particularly in recruitment ads, on forms, and during interviews.** Review your forms and written material to make them as easy to understand as possible. Avoid the use of jargon and acronyms. (This will help **all** your volunteers, not just those of CALD backgrounds.)

- **Use images (e.g. photos) and universal symbols rather than writing to communicate where possible.** By making your advertisements, promotional material and your signage easier for non-English speakers to understand you will make your organisation more accessible/less threatening, and volunteering in your organisation will be more attractive.

- **Make it easy to apply.** Allow various methods of application so as not to exclude people who may not have good written English. For example, someone could visit your organisation or phone to register their interest and have someone else take down their details. Or people could attend an information session and be assisted to apply at the end or in a follow-up session.

When your volunteers have basic or limited English or limited exposure to Australian workplace practices, then clear communication about roles, responsibilities and procedures is an essential part of good risk management.

- **Make sure that first encounters with your organisation are likely to be comfortable for people of CALD backgrounds.** Train staff to deal with phone calls from non-English speakers in a culturally aware way, and make sure that the person on your front desk is culturally sensitive and trained to deal well with people from a range of cultural and language backgrounds.

- **Be prepared to be flexible about settings and times for information sessions and interviews.** Family responsibilities and sometimes culturally-based restrictions (for example, on young women) may make day or evening or unaccompanied meetings difficult. People may also be more willing to come to information sessions and initial interviews at a familiar community facility than at your organisation.

- **Consider group interviews, workshops and information sessions for volunteers.** People from some cultures may feel less intimidated in a group setting than one-on-one. They may also be encouraged to volunteer if they can do so with a friend or family member.

- **Allow applicants to bring a third person to an interview if it makes them feel more comfortable.** You may be able to use this person as a language resource, but remember to conduct the interview with the applicant, not the third person. Always address the applicant directly and face them when they are speaking.

- **Review interview questions for people with limited or basic English.** Make sure each question is clear, asks just one thing, and does not require complicated multi-layered answers. Avoid questions that can be answered just with Yes or No, but use simple questions to find out more about the person, what they can do and what they want from volunteering.

- **Limit the information you present during induction to a few clear, key messages.** Use different languages and media as needed. Aim to have people going home with a clear understanding of what the organisation expects of its volunteers and how it operates.

Standard 4. Work and the workplace

An organisation that involves volunteers shall clearly specify and control the work of volunteers and ensure that their place of work is conducive to preserving their health, safety and wellbeing.

Organisations have a duty of care to their staff and legislated responsibilities for their health, safety and wellbeing. When your volunteer program involves people with basic or limited English and perhaps limited exposure to Australian workplace practices, then clear and effective communication about roles, responsibilities and procedures becomes an essential part of good risk management.

Also, a workplace where volunteers' needs are considered and respected is conducive to a good working environment and to staff wellbeing. When people from a range of cultural and language backgrounds are involved, this becomes even more important because they may have a range of specific and differing needs.

Following are some strategies to help keep your volunteers from diverse backgrounds happy, healthy and working effectively:

People from CALD backgrounds bring valuable language skills and cultural knowledge to organisations but avoid confining them to roles that focus only on these skills.

- **Offer real, valuable roles, not token roles.** Make sure that volunteer roles give people scope to use and acquire a range of skills. People from CALD backgrounds bring valuable language skills and cultural knowledge to organisations but avoid confining them to roles that focus only on these skills.

- **Offer flexibility in volunteer roles.** Design roles that make it easier for people to volunteer, by offering flexible hours or tasks that fit in with family or other commitments, and work that can be carried out at home or online (virtual volunteering). Be prepared to redesign or create new roles around volunteers' skills after recruitment.

- **Explain roles and responsibilities fully.** Take new volunteers through their role when they apply, and again during orientation/induction. Do not just rely on the written job description. Encourage new volunteers to ask questions if they are unsure about anything and make sure they know where to go and who to ask if they have questions.

- **Provide post-induction support for your volunteers.** Consider allocating a buddy or mentor for each volunteer – someone they feel comfortable approaching and communicating with.

- **Create a short summary of important policies and procedures relevant to the volunteer in their orientation package.** Make sure it is easy to understand, using plain English and visual communication where possible. Talk volunteers through this during information and orientation sessions.

- **Make OH & S signage and procedures as easy as possible to understand for people with limited English.** Consider using pictures, symbols and visual cues rather than text.

- **Have flexibility in procedures so that they can be adapted to suit the preferences of the volunteer.** For example, formal/informal communication, group/one-on-one communication, hands-on management/allow autonomy, etc.

- **Organise the workplace and its routines to accommodate the social, religious or cultural needs of volunteers as far as possible.** Cultural difference does not have to be a barrier to working as a volunteer or a reason not to recruit volunteers from CALD communities, it may just require specific arrangements. Muslims may need a private area where they can pray; women from some cultures may not be able to be teamed with a male volunteer; some volunteers will need to fast or observe particular religious festivals; alcohol and certain foods may be off limits to some at social events; traditional dress requirements may not fit your organisation's dress codes; there may be limits to the physical contact people can have, which has implications for your first-aid and emergency procedures or your client servicing.

Take these into account as far as possible and, where it would be unreasonably difficult for you to make the necessary adjustments, explain this to the volunteers and allow them to negotiate the nature and extent of their involvement.

- **Make 'working successfully with people from diverse backgrounds' a core competency** in position descriptions for both paid staff and volunteers.

'And once you become a volunteer, it's not like you're just a volunteer. You're supported by the community in terms of learning and so on.' Jenna Joyan, volunteer at the al-Ghazzali Centre

All volunteers need proper induction and training to be able to perform their role well.

Standard 5. Training and development

An organisation that involves volunteers shall ensure that volunteers obtain the knowledge, skills, feedback on work and the recognition needed to effectively carry out their responsibilities.

Training and development are key components of any effective volunteer program. All volunteers need proper induction and training to be able to perform their role well.

Induction and training programs for volunteers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds will need careful planning so they are able to meet the specific needs of people from different backgrounds. Following are some ideas to help you tailor induction, training and development programs to have your volunteers performing at their peak:

- **Think about different ways to provide training to suit diverse cultures.** Think about how cultural issues might affect training group size, group make-up, language needs, literacy in English, preferences for active and passive ways of learning, degree of participation. Tailor training to suit the language needs and preferred learning style of the audience.
- **Consider using external providers and outside networks to deliver culturally appropriate training if you do not have sufficient resources.**
- **Provide ongoing training and development opportunities for all volunteers.** As well as making volunteers feel valued, you need to ensure that their knowledge and skills are up to date. Offer volunteers of CALD background the same opportunities for training and development as others.
- **Informally evaluate understanding of training and orientation.** Encourage questions and two-way communication.
- **Promote open communication.** Encourage feedback from those who may not be comfortable speaking up.
- **Don't let language difficulties get in the way of providing volunteers with feedback and appraisal.** All volunteers have a right to know how they are going in their role. If you need to, involve a third party in these discussions so that feedback is effective and is a two-way process. Make sure the third person is someone whom both you and the volunteer trust to get the messages right, and who respects the confidential nature of the discussion.
- **Use valued volunteers to help recruit and train next generation of volunteers.** Not only will this assist in providing culturally appropriate training for your new volunteer, it will also help with succession planning.
- **Ensure paid staff have training in working with volunteers and are aware of what motivates them.** It is important for your paid staff to accept and respect your volunteers.

'We have in-service. We have to go to learn, before we work. I like that. Every time I learn more.' Cissy Chung, volunteer at Museum Victoria

Survey customers to find out how well they feel they are being served by your volunteers. Knowing what your customers think is essential to monitoring service delivery.

Standard 6. Service delivery

An organisation that involves volunteers shall ensure that appropriate processes and procedures are established and followed for effective planning, control, and review of all activities relating to the delivery of services by volunteers.

One of the key benefits of involving people from CALD backgrounds in your volunteering program is the improvement it can bring to your service delivery. It makes sense, then, to monitor and evaluate their work to see whether this benefit is being realised. Proper planning, control and review of service delivery performed by your volunteers will also help you make the best use of their time and skills.

'Coming from a corporate background, I've always been used to structure, an agenda, and good organisation. And I see a lot of that here which makes it very easy for me to work.' *Mohamed El-Bohaty, volunteer with the al-Ghazzali Centre*

The following strategies can help you monitor whether your service delivery is effective:

- **Review your existing service delivery procedures.** Check whether they are appropriate for all volunteers of CALD background – some may need to be amended to suit cultural sensitivities.
- **Think about the services your volunteers currently provide.** Is it appropriate to have all volunteers delivering the same services regardless of language and cultural background, or should the roles be adapted?
- **Make sure your volunteers are thoroughly trained in the products or services they will be delivering.** Consider providing culturally specific training if your current training program is unsuitable for your volunteers from CALD backgrounds.
- **Ensure your volunteers know where to seek help if they encounter an enquiry or problem they are unable to deal with.** Knowing they have back-up will give them the confidence to tackle new situations. It will also ensure your service delivery does not suffer.
- **Schedule regular reviews of the service delivery performed by your volunteers.**
- **Survey customers, either formally or informally,** to find out how well they feel they are being served by your volunteers. Knowing what your customers think is essential to monitoring service delivery.

Keeping records of your volunteers and their activities will help you evaluate of your program and guide you towards improvement.

Standard 7. Documentation and records

An organisation that involves volunteers shall establish a system and have defined procedures to control all documentation and personnel records that relate to the management of volunteers.

Regardless of whether you involve volunteers from a range of cultural backgrounds in your program, documentation and record keeping are an important component of good volunteer management. Recording and documenting your volunteers and their activities will assist with review and evaluation of your program, and guide you towards improvement. Maintaining records on your volunteers from CALD backgrounds can also help you gather information to create a valuable cultural knowledge base.

- **Review your existing personnel forms to see whether they include questions to gather cultural and linguistic information.** You may need to add fields to ensure that you capture important information about your volunteers from CALD backgrounds. Being able to profile the cultural diversity of your organisation can be useful in many ways, from measuring your skills base, or planning training programs, or identifying new service opportunities, through to strengthening funding submissions.

- **For volunteers who are not comfortable filling in forms, capture their application information verbally then transpose to written records.** Ensure that this is done in a way that does not compromise information privacy or confidentiality. Avoid discussing what should go in the form over the reception desk, and if you need to involve a third person to help collect this information, make sure they understand the information privacy requirements.

- **Make sure that new volunteers understand why the organisation collects certain personal information, and make sure that they understand what happens with that information and who has access to it.** The personal experiences and historical circumstances of some groups, particularly those who have arrived as refugees, can make them understandably wary of giving information to institutions and organisations. It is important both when recruiting and during induction to clearly explain why you need this information and how you will protect it. This is particularly important in relation to any 'police checks' process.

Reviews should involve volunteers so policies and procedures can be checked against their experience.

Standard 8. Continuous improvement

An organisation that involves volunteers shall plan and continually review its volunteer management system to ensure that opportunities to improve the quality of the system are identified and actively pursued.

Continuous improvement of your volunteer program is essential if you want to maintain best practice standards. Regular reviews and updates of your volunteer program will help you identify strengths and weaknesses and tailor your program accordingly.

As you learn more about your new volunteers and their cultures, use this information to strengthen and improve your procedures.

- **Policies, procedures and processes should be evolving documents that are reviewed and updated on a regular basis.** As new volunteers of CALD background become established, issues and gaps in your policies may become apparent. A regular review process to update policies and procedures will ensure they remain relevant and useful to the organisation. Review processes should involve volunteers so that policies and procedures can be checked against their experience.

- **Survey your volunteers on a regular basis to get their feedback on your volunteering program.** Ask questions that relate to issues of concern for volunteers of CALD background, such as communication, training and support, the working environment and hours. Use the feedback to refine the program.

- **Survey your clients/users on a regular basis to get their feedback on interaction with your volunteers.** This will help you to identify difficulties volunteers may be having and areas that may be able to be addressed with further training, changes to work routines or role design, or improved information/induction processes for new recruits and so on.

- **Provide volunteers with opportunities to give informal feedback and make suggestions.** Formal review processes can fail to capture 'spur-of-the-moment' good ideas, and often also favour input from people who are comfortable with formal organisational processes and who are confident in reading English and giving written feedback. Make sure all volunteers have a number of opportunities and avenues (written and oral) to give feedback and make suggestions. These could include a daily journal/logbook for volunteer and paid staff to comment in; a suggestion box; a daily or end-of roster-debrief of one or two volunteers chosen at random each day; a regular 'ideas' meeting over lunch; giving a team member/buddy the task of helping a volunteer with poor English/literacy skills write down their feedback.

Make sure that you let volunteers know how their feedback has affected or shaped improvements to the volunteer program or the organisation's services/activities.

- **Monitor your retention rates over set periods.** Keeping statistics on departures as well as overall volunteer numbers will help you to identify higher loss rates for particular groups of volunteers and you can then investigate how this can be remedied.

- **Conduct exit interviews.** When people leave, make sure you know why, so that any necessary changes can be made to support volunteer retention.



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• SCENARIOS – WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

Almost all your organisation's volunteers until now have come from Anglo-Celtic backgrounds. One of your new recruits from a different background is performing well in the role she has been given, but your existing volunteers are unwelcoming and exhibit hostile behaviour towards her. What could you do to help them work together?

Harassing and hostile behaviour is unacceptable in any workplace, whether it is generated by paid staff or volunteers. You should take immediate measures to ensure that the hostility ceases, and make your new volunteer aware that the behaviour of your existing volunteers is not condoned.

Things to consider:

- Do you have a written policy on occupational health and safety for your volunteers?

- Does your policy address harassment and discrimination in the workplace?

- Is there a discernible reason why your existing volunteers are acting this way? Could it be that they feel threatened/uncomfortable/excluded by your new strategy?

- Have you given cross-cultural training to your existing staff and volunteers?

- Have you consulted your volunteers to canvas their thoughts and input on your new strategy?

One of your recently recruited volunteers from a CALD background has been performing well but suddenly becomes reclusive and/or wants to leave the organisation. What could you do to find out what happened?

It is likely that your volunteer's sudden change of behaviour has been prompted by a specific incident. You need to try to find out what the incident was, and whether you are able to address and rectify the situation. Remember, the incident may not have happened in your workplace – it may be a personal or family issue.

Things to consider:

- Does the volunteer feel comfortable confiding in you?

- Do you have an established procedure for feedback and/or complaints that you could encourage your volunteer to use?

- Does the volunteer have a friend or buddy who may be able to give you an insight into the problem?

- Has anything about the volunteer's duties or environment in your workplace changed?

- Have you asked the volunteer's colleagues for their input?

Do you have an established complaints/feedback procedure for your clients?

Do you have a procedure for reviewing the service delivery of your volunteers?

Your organisation receives a complaint from an important client about having to deal with one of your volunteers who he says ‘can’t speak proper English’. How could you handle the complaint?

This situation needs careful consideration and sensitive handling. You obviously do not want to alienate your client, but neither can you condone racial discrimination. You need to carefully assess the complaint to see whether there is any legitimacy to it in terms of the level of service he is receiving, or whether he is simply being discriminatory on the basis of ethnicity.

Things to consider:

- Do you have an established complaints/feedback procedure for your clients? Has this client been encouraged to use this procedure?

- Is there someone in your organisation who is responsible for dealing with this client, or customer complaints in general?

- Do you have a procedure for reviewing the service delivery of your volunteers? Have you reviewed the service/s being delivered by the volunteer to this client? Has service delivery been unsatisfactory, or does the client’s complaint seem unfounded?

- If the volunteer’s English is poor, but the service delivery has been satisfactory in other respects, what can you do to support the volunteer but also to satisfy the client?

- How would you handle the complaint if it was about an English-speaking volunteer? Is the same procedure appropriate in this instance?

- Would it be possible or beneficial to remove the volunteer from contact with this particular client? Are you satisfied with the message this may send to the client and/or volunteer?

- Do you have an anti-discrimination policy that may apply in this instance? Have you made your client aware of your policy?

A volunteer from a CALD background is performing unsatisfactorily. What approach could you take?

There are many reasons why your volunteer may not be performing at the level you require. You should review her working conditions to try to identify the cause of the problem and take appropriate steps to try to rectify the situation.

Things to consider:

- Do you have a documented induction procedure for volunteers? Was the volunteer properly inducted?

- Do you have a position description for the role the volunteer is performing? Have you checked that she understands her responsibilities? Do you need to have the position description translated?

- Has the volunteer received training for the role she is performing? Did she understand the training? Does the volunteer require additional training?

- Do you have an established procedure for providing feedback or performance management to volunteers?

- Are there any cultural issues or misunderstandings that may be affecting her performance? Are there any factors in her work environment that may be interfering with her performance? Is there anything you can do to help address these issues?

Do you have an anti-discrimination policy?

Does your selection process conform to the policy?

You have interviewed a man from a CALD background for a volunteer role, and you want to encourage him to volunteer, but believe him to be unsuitable for the position. How could you advise him that he has been unsuccessful in his application?

The procedure you would use for advising a man from a CALD background that his application for a volunteer position has been unsuccessful is likely to be the same as the one you would use for any other applicant. The only instance in which you may need to consider adapting your usual procedure is when language barriers may pose a problem.

Things to consider:

- Do you have an established procedure for notifying unsuccessful applicants? Is your procedure suitable in this instance, or do you need to adapt it? Do you need to use a translation service?

- Do you have an anti-discrimination policy? Do your reasons for rejecting the application fit with your anti-discrimination policy?

- Does the applicant have valuable skills that would be useful to your organisation? Are you able to utilise these skills in another capacity?

- Have you clearly articulated your reasons for rejecting the application? Have you used non-discriminatory language? What constructive feedback can you give the applicant?

'We're very aware that clubs have entrenched cultures that have been developed over a very long period of time...'

SOME CASE STUDIES

SURF LIFE SAVING AUSTRALIA (SLSA)

Surf Life Saving Australia is one of Australia's oldest volunteer-based organisation and is celebrating its centenary in 2007, Year of the Surf Lifesaver.

SLSA's 'On the Same Wave' program is its first campaign targeting Australians from diverse cultural backgrounds. It aims to provide support to young Australians of all backgrounds, particularly those of Middle Eastern background, to engage in surf life saving around Australia. It also aims to increase Surf Life Saving's openness and responsiveness to cultural diversity and to increase diversity within clubs. The program will include communities and surf clubs across Australia, with an initial focus on NSW. The program is a partnership between the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Surf Life Saving and Sutherland Shire Council, NSW.

Chris Giles is National Development Manager with Surf Lifesaving Australia

'We are a predominantly Anglo-Saxon membership and I guess the general stereotype in the community is that we're all bronzed, fit, white, blue-eyed, blond-haired surf life savers. This perception is a very visual barrier to participation. Most people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background just don't see themselves as that bronzed Aussie hero.'

'On the Same Wave is only in its start up phase. We've got a full group of Lebanese Muslim trainees that are going through their course at the moment. I think about 15 of them have passed. It's now about putting them on patrol and moving them into the volunteer phase. So it'll be interesting to see the retention rates of those.'

'We're very aware that clubs have entrenched cultures that have been developed over a very long period of time: distinctly "Australian", distinctly "surf lifesaving". There may be some level of resistance to change. Obviously our clubs are led and driven by boards and committees but there's a strong membership base under there and well, you probably can't guarantee that all members would be accepting of new members from a CALD background.'

'We've trialled some cultural awareness training, mainly with the senior personnel who would then be passing that on to the broader membership. The training spoke very much of the need to be an inclusive organisation but this was probably a step beyond what the clubs really wanted. They were after the 'how to' and the 'why': if somebody from a CALD background is to join our club and there are some issues or there's some tensions, how do we resolve those? That sort of thing. And that's probably what the clubs are looking for more than a lecture on harmonious inclusiveness.'

'We've had enormous changes in the last twenty-five years. Up until 1980, Surf Life Saving was a male-dominated organisation and women were not allowed to join as active members. These days there's almost a 50/50 split in the membership and if those changes hadn't happened, then the organisation would definitely be irrelevant to Australia now. Probably almost non-existent. I think there are parallels in the challenges and changes that had to take place in clubs over that period to what needs to happen in this day and age in relation to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.'

'I always enjoy and like working with the kids. I want them to mix with everyone, not only the Australians but all the other people from other countries who come in to become Australians. I want them to be mixed and just exchange our cultures. And respect them, you know.'

'There's still challenges for women in relation to leadership roles within Surf Life Saving but in relation to involvement and participation, there's been seamless integration, I think. Hopefully in twenty-five years time, we'll be saying the same about the ethnic make up of Surf Life Saving.'

The Surf Life Saving story makes it clear that pragmatic motivations (such as the need for survival) can be more effective than idealistic ones (such as the desire to be inclusive) in getting people to move outside their comfort zones and make lasting changes to their organisation. This underlines the importance of making a case to management based on cost-benefit as well as on philosophical goals when you want to pursue a particular recruitment strategy. The SLSA experience also indicates that some changes need to be 'top down' rather than 'bottom up' to take effect. Another point to note about this case is that people trying to make real changes often need more than just a set of goals – they need practical strategies and tools to get there.

CRICKET AUSTRALIA & QUEENSLAND CRICKET

As the national peak body for cricket, Cricket Australia believes volunteers are crucial to the sport at all levels and it encourages everyone in cricket to adopt a best practice approach to volunteer involvement. It has adopted a National Volunteer Strategy for 2006–2009 (see www.cricket.com.au) which recognises that volunteers from culturally diverse backgrounds 'contribute to the club experience by providing new and different skills, an understanding of the non-English speaking community and the ability to support others from similar backgrounds.'

Queensland Cricket is one of six member associations of Cricket Australia and its MILO Have-A-Go program is a joint initiative of Queensland Cricket, Cricket Australia, Nestle and the Australian Sports Commission. In the program, coaches work with volunteers and parents to prepare boys and girls for junior cricket by teaching basic skills and modified cricket games.

Tagi Faanaana is a volunteer with Queensland Cricket.

'I'm scared to tell you how old I am. Oh okay, I'm sixty-nine. I came to Australia in 1983. I am Samoan.'

'I have been involved with sports all my life. The Have A Go program is sponsored by Queensland Cricket. I'm just helping out on a voluntary basis to my good friend, Neil Paulsen. We work in the State Primary Schools encouraging the children to take up cricket or any kind of sports. I always enjoy and like working with the kids. I want them to mix with everyone, not only the Australians but all the other people from other countries who come in to become Australians. I want them to be mixed and just exchange our cultures. And respect them, you know.'

'I try to encourage other Samoans to volunteer with their kids too but they often say, "Do we get paid?" And I say, "That's not our Samoan culture: that's an outside idea. New. Remember in Samoa, we never get paid in our life for these things." To be honest with you, I'm not sure how successful I am in persuading people with that though. In Samoa they would listen because I have my status as chief: over there, you just tell the orator, the messenger to go and get so-and-so, and they will get them to see you but in here, they can have a lot of excuses not to come! (Laughing) Many, many excuses!'

'I suppose a few of my friends were already involved and I was looking for a place where I could put something back.'

Tagi Faanaana is also a member of the Queensland State Government Task Force on Youth Violence, set up late in 2006.

'My work with the Task Force began when I read a story in the news about these young boys who have been in trouble: Samoans against the Tongans and all that sort of thing. So I thought I'd better see if I can be of any help. We called a meeting for the Samoan community around Ipswich. Then I was asked would I be a part of the Task Force in Brisbane and I say "Yes". I very quickly say, "Yes."

'It's always held at police headquarters opposite the Roma Street Station. Every month. I don't think I am paid, I don't know.. (chuckle)..well, I haven't been paid yet! But we always have a good cup of tea in the afternoon there.

'I represent the Pacific Island community; we have Asians and Moslems – all sorts. There are many qualified people, professors and all this sort of thing you know, and (just between you and me) I can get confused in what's going on. We're put in different groups and we discuss such and such a thing and all. They use the big words, so big words. It's even bigger than my name, longer than my name you know. I'm sure there must be also simple words that explain things, shorter words!'

Tagi Faanaana's experience points to how much the concept of volunteering can vary across cultures and how much it can depend on context. Some of the members of his Australian Samoan community seem not to relate the 'formal volunteering' they see in the Australian context to their own community's traditions of mutual aid and reciprocity, but are inclined instead to see volunteering as just unpaid work and perhaps exploitative. This emphasises how important it is for organisations recruiting volunteers from diverse backgrounds to pay attention to these differing ideas of volunteering and voluntary work, and to build on a range of understandings when promoting volunteering in culturally diverse communities.

AL-GHAZZALI CENTRE

The al-Ghazzali Centre for Islamic Sciences and Human Development is a non-profit, non-sectarian learning centre, committed to the dissemination of traditional Islamic principles and knowledge. Through its Crescent Project, the Centre involves volunteers from Muslim communities in a Feeding the Homeless Program at Hyde park in Sydney in which homeless people are provided with food and clothing, regardless of their gender, religion or ethnicity. For more information about the Centre and its projects, visit <http://www.alghazzali.org>

Mohammed El-Botaty is a volunteer at the al-Ghazzali Centre & Crescent Project

'I was attending religious lessons for quite a while before one day, at the end of the session, I put my hand up and it went from there. I suppose a few of my friends were already involved and I was looking for a place where I could put something back. By then too, I'd started to see how organised the Centre was and what I could actually do for them.

'I'm thirty and married and my job is very full on: lots of working hours. Coming from a corporate background, I've always been used to structure: an agenda and good organisation. And I see a lot of that here which makes it very easy for me to work. I know that if something's said it's going to be done on a Saturday at 8 o'clock in the morning, I know for sure that it's going to be. I'm not going to show up there and wait or I'm not going to get , you know a call an hour before to say, 'Hey, it's not on today.'

'I'm involved with a bunch of people who really believe in what they're doing... they are like my second family.'

'One of the things I enjoy the most is the Crescent Project. Different organisations take responsibility for delivering food to the homeless on different days. So 365 days a year, it's Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and different corporate organisations like MLC, Qantas, whatever. Our Centre gives a day a month.'

'Once I started contributing more, I found a community of friends who are like-minded and that helps me do more of these kinds of things. A central message of the Centre is, "If you want to know God, then you've got to help other people." And that has inspired me: the message coming through loud and clear is that learning for yourself is one thing but going out and helping others is another.'

'To be honest with you, I don't think I've done enough or have done anything, really. So now, it's in my head and I've got an awareness of it, well the next thing that is the challenge for me is, what am I going to do about it?'

Jenna Joyan is a volunteer at the al-Ghazzali Centre

'I came here from Afghanistan when I was about five or six years old. I am the second youngest of eight children. I think I might appreciate my residence and my citizenship in Australia more so than the majority of people because as a refugee and coming from a country like Afghanistan, you know there's not a day that goes past where I don't thank God and thank the community for giving me and my family a chance to live here and to be educated and have all of these amazing opportunities in front of us to learn and grow. And so for me, my volunteering is a matter of absolutely giving back.'

'The al-Ghazzali Centre is very, very practical. Everything we do, from feeding the homeless to tree planting, is practical. And once you become a volunteer, it's not like you're just a volunteer. You're supported by the community in terms of learning and so on. Brother Afroz cracks the whip now and then about getting things done when people are slacking off or whatever because of time constraints, but his door is always open to us to go and approach him and enhance our own personal development. We're helping him help the community and he's helping us as individuals in return.'

'I'm in marketing and I use my professional skills to help the Centre especially with major events, seminars, international guests and so on. There are times when there's a big influx of activity and it's like day and night, working but I'm involved with a bunch of people who really believe in what they're doing and they're doing it with so much love and dedication, and you know you can't force anybody to bring that into any sort of organisation. Everybody brings this willingly and this means it's so much fun. The volunteer crew and the administration crew are like my second family, a second big family.'

The al-Ghazzali Centre has engaged its volunteers by providing them with work and opportunities in which they feel useful and valued; in which they can express their values and aspirations as Muslims and citizens; which provide them with personal and professional development; and which connect them with both their own community and the wider society, and help them feel a part of something larger.

'We have a party at the end of year just for volunteers and staff and then twice a year we have formal update sessions where curators and museum managers come and tell the volunteers what's coming up.'

MUSEUM VICTORIA

Museum Victoria is responsible for Victoria's public museums and has been involving volunteers for over 100 years. There are three main museums – the Melbourne Museum, Scienceworks and the Immigration Museum – and each involves volunteers working front of house and behind the scenes. In 2004–2005, Museum Victoria had 625 volunteers from an active and stable pool of 460.

The Horizons Program for volunteers is a training, professional development and rewards program developed by the Melbourne Museum but now available to all Museum Victoria volunteers, and in May 2005 Museum Victoria launched its Volunteer Recognition Program. Intending volunteers are asked to make an initial minimum time commitment and undergo a police check. For more information about volunteering at Museum Victoria go to <http://www.museum.vic.gov.au/about/volunteering.asp>

Jane Humphrys is the Manager of the Volunteer Program at Museum Victoria

'Four hundred and fifty volunteers is our capacity really. That gives us a ratio of about one hundred and fifty to one [staff member] which is about as many as we can support with the kind of program we provide.'

According to Jane, word-of-mouth promotion more than meets their recruitment needs: 'We get six hundred enquiries a year and we find that diversity is almost inbuilt because our staff is very diverse and our visitors are very diverse and we're situated here in Carlton [an ethnically diverse inner suburb of Melbourne, with a high student population]. There are twenty-six different languages spoken amongst the volunteers and many are multilingual. All our volunteers do speak English though.'

'We get a lot of overseas students with limited English who really want to work in front of house. We see their English come along incredibly because of the kind of communication that they're undertaking. We're very clear about the kind of experience it is – that it's talking to kids and discussing things with parents and providing they feel confident enough, then language is absolutely no barrier at all.'

'Most of our budget goes on rewards and recognition of one sort or another and we have a lot of focus on communication as well. So, weekly email bulletins and we have a monthly morning tea.'

'We celebrate National Volunteer Week in May with a formal 'sit down' recognition evening in the Age Theatre here at Melbourne Museum. Then in December, we celebrate International Volunteer Day with an outing somewhere, a whole day for volunteers and their families. We have a party at the end of year just for volunteers and staff and then twice a year we have formal update sessions where curators and museum managers come and tell the volunteers what's coming up in terms of gallery redevelopment and that sort of thing.'

'The motivation for volunteering here is really varied of course. There's certainly a great pride in being associated with the Museum and being able to contribute to the community through it. Then there's the social aspect and the passion for the content: the collections, learning, further learning - this is very strong.'

'I speak Mandarin and Cantonese and when people come sometimes, the Museum rings and asks me to entertain officials or specialists from China who come to put up exhibits.'

'Our Horizons program offers training to expand the horizons of the volunteers, with professional development, IT training sessions, bus trips to cultural organisations and chances to get back-of-house and meet curators and see what happens in the areas that the general public wouldn't be able to see. The standard of training here is excellent.

'We don't think of our volunteers as culturally and linguistically diverse. I mean, obviously they are, but we just think that this is a place where people happen to come from many different backgrounds. We don't have quotas and we don't think of our volunteers in that way. They're just themselves...'

Cissy Chung is a volunteer at Museum Victoria

'I am seventy-one now. I got a friend who told me, she said, "I saw an ad in the Museum and they want the volunteer." She told me this because I already retired in 1995 and I thought I should do something, three things, in the coming years. First, I want to live a healthy life; second, keep myself active and be a useful person; thirdly, contribute service which can be a benefit to other people in the society.

'I think I start in 2000. It's a long time, seven years but they are very good there, you know. They don't force me. They don't say, "You must work so many hours a week." No, they are flexible. When I first go, I go twice a week but now I look after my grandchildren. One time a week now and in the school holidays. They are very welcoming always but recently they have two new people and they are even more friendly now. More close to us. Sometimes they have morning tea with us and then they have some bus trips with the museum workers all together. And they do other things: like they send me a key holder and they say, "You already work for so many hours so we got for you this present." And I'm not expecting this: I don't even know how many hours I've been working.

'I work in the Children's section because I been teaching for over thirty years. So I ask the Museum to put me there. Every school holidays they always put up a new theme and we have in-service. We have to go to learn, before we work. I like that. Every time I learn more.

'I speak Mandarin and Cantonese and when people come sometimes, the Museum rings and asks me to entertain officials or specialists from China who come to put up exhibits. A new one coming is "The Great Wall of China models" and these visitors, they don't speak English at all. I have to help them to settle down and help them with their shopping and any other matters.

'There are many different nationalities at the Museum. I don't know how many. Like Greeks and Italians, they look like Western people so if I don't speak to them, I don't know if they are Australian or from other nationalities. Indians, you can see who they are, and Asians too. But we are all speaking English to each other.

'I came to Australia in 1971 with my husband and my son, only four years old. My son and daughter-in law are very happy and appreciative of what I do now at the Museum. Sometimes I give them some staff tickets so they can look at the exhibition. And they come and they are very proud of me.

'I never went to the Museum before I volunteer. I had to ask the people, 'Where is the old Museum?' when I first went to apply. But now, I go to the Museum and open my eyes. There are a lot of new things to learn.'

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Museum Victoria's success in running a program for a large number of volunteers across several sites is built on its structured approach to selection, induction and training, on offering volunteers roles appropriate to their skills and their aspirations, and on rewarding Museum volunteers and making them feel part of the wider organisation. The fact that people from a wide range of backgrounds volunteer at the Museums means that cultural and language diversity, and diversity management, is a given of the program.

