

CMYI eNEWS – FEBRUARY 2005

Dear,

Welcome to the first CMYI e-newsletter for 2005.

We hope you find the articles, resources and news highlighted in this edition of interest. We encourage you to forward this e-newsletter on to your networks and to subscribe to future editions if you have received this newsletter via someone else (by clicking on the subscribe button located on the [CMYI homepage](#)). Our aim is to make this newsletter an easily accessible and up-to-date source of information for those working in the multicultural youth sector.

On a more sombre note, January 27 marked the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz where 1.5 million people - mostly Jews - were killed during the Second World War. The Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues would like to acknowledge this anniversary and pay homage to the millions of people around the world whose lives have been affected by war and racial or religious persecution.

Feature article

Iraqi and Sudanese young people speak about the big events that are shaping their world

By Anna Hutchens, CMYI Leadership and Mentoring Project Worker, and Louise Olliff, CMYI Communications Officer

The tragic events of December 26, 2004, sent a shockwave through the international community. The devastation wrought by the Boxing Day tsunami will be felt for decades to come, particularly by those left behind in its wake. CMYI wishes to extend its deepest sympathy to the communities affected by the disaster, both in the affected areas and here in Australia.

As rebuilding takes place in the devastated areas of Asia, two other significant world events are unfolding that will likely have a profound effect on two communities with sizeable diasporas in Australia – the Iraqi and Sudanese communities.

For Iraqi and Sudanese young people in Australia, the recently held Iraqi elections and the peace agreement in Sudan are potentially significant events in their lives. Undoubtedly, those who fled Iraq and Sudan due to decades of civil war, uncertainty and oppression will have something to say about these major events, particularly when most have family and friends living back in their homeland.

CMYI talked to four young people about their ideas, hopes and fears surrounding the elections in Iraq and the peace agreement in Sudan.

Iraqi elections

Bella, 20, and Baylet, 24, both Assyrian-Iraqis, were interviewed before the January 31 Iraqi elections about the feelings and expectations of the Assyrian-Iraqi community in Australia. As members of an ethnic minority group in Iraq, these elections were the first in which Assyrians were entitled to vote.

As Bella explains: 'People knowing that they have a right to vote makes them think that the country is moving forwards.'

'Being Assyrian, we are excited because it is our homeland,' she says. 'How could you not be? This is the first time [Assyrians] have got to vote and we came from that country. Our ancestors are from there and we have never had the right to vote.'

Assyrian Christians, a non-Arab, Semitic people with a 5,000-year presence in northern Iraq, constitute an estimated 1.5–5% of the Iraqi population. Under the Saddam regime, there was systematic persecution and oppression of the Assyrian and other ethnic minorities.

'For Assyrians, hopefully [the election] will help to give us the right to play our own music, have weddings and parties, all of which were illegal under the Saddam regime,' says Baylet.

Even though Bella and Baylet, both university students, were small children when they arrived in Australia, the significance of the enfranchisement of Assyrian-Iraqis has not been lost.

'When we hear the stories of what has happened to our parents and what this election really means, it moves us emotionally,' says Bella.

Both see the challenge of developing a true democracy in Iraq, however, as a long and difficult process.

'I'm trying to stay positive. I think we can still expect to see assassinations and killings, but something will come out of that in the end; maybe in one or two years' time. It's going to take a couple of years for Iraq to become truly democratic,' she says.

For more information about the Assyrian-Iraqi community, go to <http://www.assyrianchristians.com/> or contact your nearest Migrant Resource Centre for an Iraqi Community Profile.

Peace in Sudan

On 9th January, 2005, a peace agreement was signed in Nairobi, Kenya, bringing an end to the world's longest-running civil war in Sudan; a war that has cost the country an estimated 2 million lives. For Sudanese young people, peace in their homeland is something they have never before experienced in their lifetimes.

Andrew and Michael, both Sudanese-born students and community advocates, spoke of the incredible excitement and celebrations being held by Sudanese people around the world.

'Many of the Sudanese living as refugees in Kenya, Uganda, Egypt are celebrating. There is continuous dancing, singing, cultural events, happiness,' Andrew describes. 'They have been waiting for this day for 22 years.'

'The Sudanese community in Australia is also very happy and celebrating. As soon as we heard the news from Kenya, people started meeting to organise the celebrations.'

As for what the peace agreement will actually mean on the ground, Andrew and Michael both express some uncertainty.

'It depends on what the government and the rebels decide,' Andrew explains. 'In the North, Islamic law is still in place there. When you go to the South, according to the Peace Agreement, there is no Islamic law there. This is what they agree; no more killing, no more torture, no more trauma, no more accusation.'

'People feel more free now than before. You can move as you want and no one will stop you... But I think the freedom will really be experienced later on. Gradually the change will come.'

Although both Andrew and Michael recognise the long road ahead, particularly in terms of the challenges of effective peacekeeping and rebuilding trust between communities that have been overshadowed by tension for decades, they are optimistic about the future and the potential of the peace agreement to bring about change.

As Michael says, although there have been many peace agreements signed in the past, this recent agreement is more hopeful because of the involvement of other countries.

'I think young [Sudanese] people are very excited and hopeful that the peace has come at last,' he says. 'I mean, it's a worry every day. You have all your relatives there and with all the war going on there is no peace of mind... So the fact that we have reached a peace means a lot.'

Or as Andrew explains, 'At least there are some steps taken now to make change. What I think is that if the government implements what they have agreed to – the equality, freedom to everybody, freedom of worship, freedom of speech, freedom of movement – I think... the future will be bright for the Sudanese people.'

Young people speak out – MC Voice Raiser Program

The young people interviewed for this article are all involved in CMYI's *MC Voice Raiser Program*, a unique mentoring project that has been launched to support young people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds who wish to become advocates for themselves and their communities. The project takes 18-25 year olds from CLD backgrounds from across Melbourne and teams them with mentors who develop their skills to tackle the issues that matter to them.

The 30-strong group, representing 13 nationalities, has already been trained in leadership, decision-making processes, the Australian political system, teamwork and advocacy. The group convenes monthly to share information, meet mentors and discuss project ideas.

If you would like to contact any of the young people involved in the *MC Voice Raiser Program*, or if you know of CLD young people who would like to bring issues to the group, contact Anna Hutchens, Mentoring Project Coordinator, on 9349-3466 or email her at ahutchens@cmyi.net.au.

Attach: Media Release "From outsiders to advocates"

What's new at CMYI

CMYI PROGRAM COORDINATOR POSITION

CMYI is currently advertising to fill the position of *Program Coordinator*. The successful applicant will have a social work or similar background with management experience, knowledge of migrant and refugee youth issues, an understanding of policy development processes and a sound knowledge of community development. This is a 0.8 – fulltime position offered at Social Worker Class 4 level.

Applicants must obtain a position description and address the key selection criteria. Previous applicants need not apply. To obtain a position description, please contact CMYI on (03) 9349 3466 or email info@cmyi.net.au

Applications close 10am, Monday 21st February 2005.

CMYI WELCOMES NEW PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY, CHILDREN AND YOUTH AFFAIRS

On 11th February, CMYI met with the Hon. Sussan Ley MP, the recently appointed Parliamentary Secretary on Children and Youth Affairs, to provide an overview of multicultural youth issues from a Victorian perspective. CMYI urged the government to continue their commitment to the initiatives outlined in the settlement services review, particularly those relating to refugee young people, and were pleased that the Hon. Ley has shown a willingness to meet with representatives from the sector and be informed on issues relating to CLD young people.

1st STATEWIDE NETWORK MEETING FOR 2005

A date for your calendar: the first Statewide Network for 2005 is scheduled to be held on Thursday, 24th March at the VicHealth Building in Carlton. As always, this will be an opportunity for workers from the multicultural youth sector to come together to discuss issues and network.

For more information on the Statewide Network, contact Alison Coelho, CMYI Community Policy Officer, at acoelho@cmyi.net.au.

Multicultural sports and recreation news

AHMED: GIVING SOMETHING BACK THROUGH SPORT

By Nick Hatzoglou, CMYI Multicultural Sports and Recreation Officer



I caught up with Ahmed Ahmed during a school holiday program at the Rec West Centre in Braybrook on Wednesday 19 January 2005, where Ahmed is working with newly arrived young people and encouraging them to participate and learn through sport.

Ahmed is very aware of the kinds of experiences and challenges faced by newly arrived refugee young people in Australia, having arrived as a refugee himself. Ahmed was five years old when war broke out in Somalia.

'It was recommended my sister and I go to Egypt where we spent five years,' Ahmed recalls. 'After being registered as refugees with the United Nations we had a choice to go to either Australia or the United States. We chose Australia and after arriving in Melbourne in the Autumn of 1999, I was

enrolled as a student at Western English Language School (WELS). I spent two terms there and then proceeded to Bayside High School in year ten and completed my VCE at the Paisley Street Campus.'

'Life was both exciting and challenging,' Ahmed remembers. 'I missed my family and homeland immensely. In VCE I studied English (as a second language), Information Technology, International Studies, Business Management and Mathematics.'

Ahmed went on to complete VCE and subsequently volunteered as a teacher's aid at Kensington Primary School, where there was a significant African population. This resulted in a 2-year part-time position, and then an offer from WELS to take on the role of Sport and Recreation Coordinator at their school holiday program.

'Sport plays an integral role in developing the students' English language skills because it forces them to communicate in English, as this is the common language,' Ahmed explains.

'For example, a mixed team of boys in soccer are required to communicate using their English skills in order to get by and succeed. Sport also enhances students' self esteem, develops confidence and provides opportunities to explore other places. By getting involved in sport you can begin to understand the system in Australia.'

Ahmed is a strong advocate for the benefits of sport, but advises that those organising sports programs for newly arrived young people must ensure that activities are appropriately run and take into consideration language and cultural issues.

'It is very important that newly arrived students are presented with opportunities to participate and try out activities, particularly sport,' says Ahmed. 'My experience tells me that in order for programs to realise their full potential, involvement of someone with the right attributes and cultural background must be an integral part.'

For more tips on how to run successful social and recreational programs for CLD young people, see CMYI's *Involving Migrant and Refugee Young People in Social and Recreational Activities* info sheet (http://www.cmyi.net.au/pdf_files/9_SocialActivities.pdf), or contact Assunta Morrone (amorrone@cmyi.net.au), CMYI's Multicultural Sports Officer.

Postcard from Hume/Moreland

Willow Kellock, Refugee Alternative Pathways Officer, Northern Region

Holiday programs

In January 2005, CMYI partnered with Australian Lebanese Welfare and Dianella Community Health in coordinating a holiday program for students at Broadmeadows English Language Centre, including a day at Williamstown beach and a picnic at Lysterfield Park. These activities support newly arrived young people to participate in recreational activities that might otherwise be difficult to access, and encourages connectedness among peers and the broader community.

For the conclusion of the Refugee Minors Project, a joint project between the Refugee Minor Program (Department of Human Services) and CMYI, DHS organised an excursion to Healesville Sanctuary for 79 unaccompanied refugee young people. Staff from CMYI, Victorian Police, Foundation House and DIMIA supported DHS to facilitate the day. This was the first visit to the Yarra Ranges region for many of the young people, and the opportunity to see Australian native animals up close was well received.



Hume Moreland Youth Cultural Connections (HMYCC) Network

The aim of the network is for workers to come together and address gaps in services for refugee/CLD young people in Hume and Moreland. The network met late last year to discuss issues concerning young people from CLD backgrounds, and invited the Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN) in Hume and Whittlesea to present on the issue of employment. Service providers and the LLEN have identified that many young people from CLD backgrounds in Hume/Moreland are seeking employment. However barriers such as low levels of English, lack of work history, and lack of information regarding employer expectations can present considerable challenges. The LLEN and HMYCC will reconvene mid-February to discuss strategies to strengthen links between industry and young people from CLD backgrounds in 2005.

Young Adult Migrant English Course (NMIT)

YAMEC (Broadmeadows) is an initiative of Northern Metropolitan Institute of TAFE, which specifically targets young people from CLD backgrounds for its English language program. CMYI is currently exploring possibilities to partner with Broadmeadows YAMEC to provide pathways support to the young people in the course, including excursions to workplaces and a preparation for employment program.

Iraqi Boys Group

CMYI's JPET and Reconnect programs in the North have partnered with Australian Lebanese Welfare to plan a camp and coordinate ongoing life skills workshops for Iraqi boys in Hume, including possible work experience placements with local businesses.

What's new in the sector

NEW RESOURCES, EVENTS, CONFERENCES

Details of upcoming events, conferences and new resources in the CLD youth sector. If you have an event or resource you want promoted through this newsletter, please send details to info@cmymy.net.au

NEW RESOURCES

- **Stories from Home** is a book where young people tell their stories of settling in the Goulburn Valley. Produced by Cutting Edge Youth services in Shepparton, the book was written and produced by a group of young people involved in a community jobs program. The participants wrote their stories and then interviewed other people in the community about why, how, when and where they had settled there. Young people researched the history of settlement in the area and gathered facts and figures that can be used alongside the stories that give insight into the recent wave of settlement in the area. CMYI is working in partnership with Cutting Edge through the *Young Refugees in the Picture* project undertaking capacity building with agencies in the Shepparton district. The booklet is a valuable resource and is available by contacting Cutting Edge on (03) 5831 6157
- **Multicultural health portal: the Diversity Health Institute Clearinghouse.** A web site which will be a central access point of information for multicultural health in Australia is due for launch shortly. The Diversity Health Institute Clearinghouse, as it will be known, will feature searchable databases on multicultural health resources, services, education and training, and research and projects. The project is funded by the NSW Government and will operate from Sydney-West Area Health Service. The site is scheduled to go live on the web in early 2005, and will be at: <http://www.dhi.gov.au/clearinghouse/> (link not yet available). For more information, contact Meher Grigorian, Information Officer, Diversity Health Institute Clearinghouse on (02) 9840 3790 or email Meher_Grigorian@wsahs.nsw.gov.au
- The International Committee of the Red Cross has launched its **Restoring Family Links website** which is geared to assist all concerned persons, whether in tsunami affected countries or elsewhere in the world, in obtaining information about their loved ones. Go to www.familylinks.icrc.org

EVENTS

- **Play by the Rules: Promoting fair and safe behaviour in sport.** Free half-day workshops to help sporting organisations, clubs and schools recognise, prevent and deal with issues of discrimination and harassment in sport. The workshop will introduce participants to *Play the Rules*, a new interactive website. Workshops to be held on 23rd March, 22nd June or 21st July. For more information go to www.playbytherules.net.au or contact the Equal Opportunity Commission Victoria, 3/380 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne VIC 3000.
- **Africa Live Night** – The Horn of Africa Communities Network are holding a night to celebrate the culture and history of communities from the Horn of Africa. Eritrean, Ethiopian, Somali and Sudanese people are coming together to share their traditional and contemporary culture on 19th February at Kensington Community Recreation Centre. For more information contact Ahmed, Yahya, Dawit, Ferrial or Issac on (03) 9687 1218 or (03) 9689 2586.

CONFERENCES

- **Engine Innovate 2005 Conference, Young Peoples Thinking On Professional Practice: An Integrated Conference for Youth and Community.** 12-16th April, Port Fairy, Victoria.

For more information go to www.adolescent.com.au or contact Gillian Swan (Ph: 0437 610 994) on gillian.swan.ei05@adolescent.com.au

- First Announcement, **Researching Refugee Health National Conference**, 16th and 17th June 2005, Melbourne. For more information go to www.latrobe.edu.au/rhrc or contact: rhrc@latrobe.edu.au

PROJECTS, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Information and updates on new projects, programs and services in the sector. If you are involved in a project that you would like others in the sector to know about, send details to info@cmyi.net.au

PROJECTS

- **International Women's Day & Girlstorey's Mandala Project** – Girlstorey is a community arts and resource centre for women aged between 15 and 30 years. Leading up to March 8 (International Women's Day), Girlstorey is running arts groups aimed at exploring the achievements and struggles of women. Open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 1-4pm, Level 2, 489 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne. For more information call Sarah on (03) 9327 2738.

PROGRAMS

- Womensport and Recreation Victoria are running a FREE **Get Active Program for African Women** at Kensington Community Recreation Centre on Monday mornings (10am - 11.30am) starting Monday 14th February 2005. For more information contact Lea on (03) 9654 7545 or go to <http://www.womensport.com.au/> and click on the "Get Active Program" link.
- Applications for membership of the **National Youth Roundtable 2005** are now open. The National Youth Roundtable brings together young people, aged 15-24 years, to address issues of importance to the Australian Government, relating to Australia's youth. The application form can be downloaded from the Government's youth website: www.thesource.gov.au. Applications close 11 March 2005. For more information contact roundtable@thesource.gov.au.
- Applications for **Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Volunteer Program** commenced on 31 January 2005. To apply for volunteer positions, go to www.melbourne2006.com.au or contact the Volunteer Program on 1300 00 2006. Young people from all backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply.
- **The Cancer Council Victoria** have resources and run workshops in different languages on issues relating to cancer (prevention, treatment, SunSmart, etc.) and will come out to community groups and run free sessions in community languages. For more information go to: <http://www.cancervic.org.au/cancer1/prevent/languages.htm>
<http://www.cancervic.org.au/cancer1/multilinguallinformation/languageSelectPage.htm>

FUNDING

- The Department of Victorian Communities, through the Victorian Office of Multicultural Affairs (VOMA), is offering **scholarships for students of the 2005 RMIT Diploma of Interpreting and Advanced Diploma of Interpreting and Translating**. Scholarships to the value of \$1,500 are being offered for the Diploma in Amharic, Dari, Dinka, Nuer, Oromo, Pushto and Tigrinya. Scholarships to the value of \$2,000 are being offered for the Advanced Diploma in Khmer and Somali. For more information contact Claire Hockley (Claire.Hockley@dvc.vic.gov.au) or call (03) 9208 3157.

- The **Foundation for Young Australians** has a number of funding opportunities available for young people and organisations that work with young people. Guidelines and application forms are available on www.youngaustralians.org or call (03) 9670 5436. Grants now open include: *Fund for Individuals* (This granting round is open to individual young people, 12 to 25 years, who are seeking support to follow their passion while contributing to their community. Applications for the first round close 22nd March); *Indigenous Small Grants* (Indigenous Small Grants provide an opportunity for organisations that work with Indigenous young people and communities to support new initiatives and the expansion of existing successful initiatives. Applications for the first round close 22nd March); and *Robert Riley Scholarships* (The Robert Riley Scholarship Program aims to promote the pursuit of justice and human rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through supporting education of young Indigenous people. Applications close 9th March).

IN THE NEWS

Multicultural youth issues in the media – what are some of the issues that are making it into the news? If you come across media articles you think should be highlighted in this newsletter, please forward to info@cmyi.net.au

- *Has youth work reached its used by date?* – Radio National (27/01/05 and 02/02/05)
In response to the December issue of 'Youth Studies Australia', which focused on youth work in Australia today, ABC Radio National's *Life Matters* featured a story about the status of youth work as a profession, and whether issues-driving projects are dominating practice and policy at the expense of young people's need to be part of the broader community. Guests included Vaughan Bowie (University of Western Sydney) and Ted Dunlop (Waikato Institute of Technology, NZ). To listen to this radio program, go to <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/talks/lm/index/default.htm>
- *G-G urges mentor scheme* – The Age 27/01/05
Governor-General Michael Jeffery fears that young Australians are becoming disengaged from the democratic process and says ways must be found to draw them back. He wants to recruit older Australians to a national mentoring program to reignite the interest of the young in how their country is governed.
- *Migrants, refugees in new peak* – The Age 10/01/05
More than 110,000 people arrived and settled in Australia in 2003-04 – an increase of nearly 20,000 on the previous yearly total of 93,914. The Business Council of Australia identifies need for increase in immigration intake to 170,000 a year to achieve 'strong economic growth.' A Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre co-ordinator, David Manne, said he was concerned that Australia's immigration intake continued to emphasise skilled migration at the expense of the less affluent or less skilled cases.