

REPORT FROM ROUNDTABLE FORUM

Diversity in the fringe: Sharing good practice in engaging young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in interface areas

11 December 2007, 11am-2pm

Wyndham Youth Resource Centre, 86 Derrimut Road, Hoppers Crossing

WELCOME

Diana Amato, CMYI Sector Development Coordinator, opened the forum with an acknowledgement of the traditional owners of the land. Diana provided an overview of CMYI's work in supporting local government (particularly in interface areas) and more broadly within the Sector Development Team.

This roundtable forum provides an opportunity for interface councils and services to share experiences, best practice and challenges.

INTERFACE COUNCIL PRESENTATIONS

Wyndham Presentation

Dianne Snowden, Unit Leader from Wyndham Youth Services, provided an overview of local settlement trends and initiatives around Wyndham. In particular:

- Large number of Polynesian young people – though hard to get stats
- WYS running dance program targeting Polynesian community (teaching traditional dance), getting 80-100 people each week (young people, family and elders)
- Cultural Development Officer has been employed who has time to engage with particular communities.
- Karen community has moved to area in last two years. Expecting around 600 Karen settling in the next 12 months.
- Karen young people use facilities on a weekly basis for traditional dance. Community also use facilities for ceremonies/cultural events.
- African community more willing to engage in mainstream (as opposed to Polynesian and Karen), mainly because this is secondary movement from different municipalities, so have previous experience accessing services. Working with New Hope MRC on future engagement.
- Running camp in January 2008 with New Hope, Open Family, Spirit West, Vic Police, to work with a couple of ethno-specific groups. Also life skills camps planned for next year.

Q: I understand it's hard to get statistics on Polynesian young people, but do you have any indication of numbers?

- Hard to say. We have hundreds of Polynesian. New Zealand Maori one of largest groups. Hard to get stats because of visa status. Also Census data not seeming to capture this – perhaps because of issues relating to filling in forms.
- Problem is Wyndham seems to be secondary movement growth, and huge gap in trying to track stats, so hard to get funding, even though we know CLD communities in area.

- Wyndham doesn't have existing infrastructure to deal with growth in refugee population.
- *Anna Hughes from settlement planning unit at DIAC:* We have great difficulty tracking secondary migration. At the moment we're able to do this if people change their details with Medicare, then we can get a much better understanding of where people are moving. So plug for anyone working with families to get them to change details with Medicare.

Q: Where are Karen community settling?

- Hobsons Bay, some in Yarra Ranges. Many coming straight to Wyndham.
- Young people staying in one house with family. Crowded conditions.

Whittlesea Presentation

Presenters from the Whittlesea Action Group (WAG) for Culturally Diverse Young People (a partnership of organisations working with refugee and migrant young people in the City of Whittlesea) co-presented an overview of their different activities and initiatives in the LGA.

Fran Linardi - Whittlesea Youth Services

- Partnership with Kildonan UnitingCare, Whittlesea Youth Services, CMYI, Whittlesea Community Connections – set up WAG in 2005. Results of the partnership have been significant over the past three years
- Cultural Diversity in City of Whittlesea:
 - Rate of growth of CLD communities and young people is significant.
 - Overall population is expected to grow from the current 130,000 to at least 195,000 by 2031 (2006 ABS).
 - It is said that six and up to 15 people move into the municipality each day.
 - Number of young people (12 to 25, 2006) is approx 23,8000 or 19% of the population (2006 ABS).
 - The current proportion of residents from NESB is 57.3%.
 - 29% of refugee and newly arrived residents (2003-4) were under the age of 19 (CMYI)
- The City of Whittlesea has a significant post-WWII migrant population. In recent years it increasingly has refugees in the secondary stage of settlement.
- With CMY resources WAG developed an Action Plan for CLD young people
- It conducted consultations and forums –with parents, service providers and young people. Research was conducted by Whittlesea Community Connections in local schools.
- The Action Plan included inclusive and targeted programs and projects
- Agencies audited programs and practices and re-targeted and broadened services to include CLD young people.
- The funding submission for Philippe Roussel, Settlement youth worker at Whittlesea Community Connections, was supported through this work with CMYI.
- Currently the WAG is strengthening putting young people central to planning. Especially through Abdi Aden's work, who is setting up a youth reference group.

Paul Papadatos – Kildonan UnitingCare

- SFYS (Intercultural Project – In My Shoes) –run in two secondary schools with young people telling stories about cultural diversity. Stories will be launched on City of Whittlesea website in 2008.
- Soccer Program – it's a good tool to get young people involved in services. We run programs in schools where young people run committees to organise the competitions.

- Learner Permit Program, with half newly arrived young people, half more established. So building relationships/connections between young people. First part of program is learning at centre, plus learners permit, which helps with them getting ID (which young people have found useful)
- Polyfuse, with WCC, drop in centre for Polynesian young people. We also have billiards, rugby – also talking about setting up youth reference committee – try to deal with high JJ involvement. We have high number of PI in the LGA, Size of PI community has increased dramatically in the past 10 years.
- We try to be inclusive in all of our programs and services at Kildonan.

Philippe Roussel – Whittlesea Community Connections

- WCC have been providing settlement support for over 10 years
- In consultation with young people and families, WCC develop and implement projects for newly arrived.
- Have developed a homework support program in two secondary schools, operating during lunch times at the schools. As homework support out of school hours is an issue (particularly in winter), our strategy has been to try to involve newly arrived young people during school hours to make sure transport and safety is not an issue.
- One paid tutor, one volunteer. Plus, trying to involve parents in the school as well. So parents will make lunch for the young people, to engage parents in schools.

Abdi Aden – Youth Services

- Developed programs to involve young people; encourage youth participation and stronger voice in planning.
- CALD/Multicultural Youth Crew – young people can have their voice heard. Not sure what to call – CLD or Multicultural??
- We find young people coming from outside of Whittlesea for Polyfuse – not sure why? Possibly because their families are in Whittlesea, so connected to LGA even if they don't live here.
- Soccer program Father/Son, Mother/Daughter – when we ran first time, there was 55+ people. Important for newly arrived families who are protective of their young people to involve parents.
- Young Leaders of Today Leadership program with Red Cross and CMYI – for some newly arrived young people, this was first time given opportunity to say what they want.
- Lunch time program/outreach – “face value” – the more they know your face, the more they know your program and getting involved in future activities.
- Forum for African communities – very newly arrived West African communities (Burundi, Sierra Leone) – only been here 6 months. Very early settlement issues – e.g. young people not having lunch at school. Teachers having difficulty working with refugee (regardless of cultural background). We will be running a forum next year.
- Iraqi community more secondary movement coming from Hume, etc.

Fadima and Wiliya Aden – Multicultural Youth Crew

- 20 young people in the crew – but from lots of different background (migrant, skilled, refugee). 20 different nationalities. But we've found the issues are very similar for young people from very different backgrounds.
- I haven't had a lot of opportunity in the past, but starting to get involved because of younger sister involved (hard because of my responsibilities)

- Looking forward to doing things I haven't done before – sometimes it's hard to do things because parents are protective, so this program is good because we get opportunity to do things we might not otherwise be able/allowed to do.

Q (To Fran Linardi): What did the initial mapping and audit reveal for City of Whittlesea Youth Services?

- It revealed that we weren't engaging CLD young people very well, not many programs were targeted, i.e. except for Polyfuse.
- We looked at the internal systems and structures with our agencies.
- As a result Council funded Youth Services for a Generalist Youth worker with a dedicated CLD portfolio.
- It has had a ripple effect. E.g. Plenty Valley Library Services has consulted WAG in the development of their youth and CALD strategies.
- The partnership between agencies, CMYI and Council has got us started, increased activity and raised consciousness of CLD and refugee young people.

Q (To Fatidma): Why don't parents want young people to be involved? Is it fear of gender mixing/ young people forming romantic relationships?

- Education is the most important issue, so romance is not the biggest barrier to getting young people involved in activities. Parents just want their children to be prioritising education.
- Suspicion also because we come from a country where young women don't go out.

Q (To Abdi Aden): What transport are you using to support high attendance?

- Community buses... and persistence. Reminding people constantly, calling parents, etc.
- Asking what people want – responding to what they want – e.g. disco at school, 120 people plus. Responding quickly to requests.
- Public transport an issue in interface. We have to actually organise pick-up and drop off for newly arrived.
- You have to be flexible – asking parents/sister to drive when they are free.

Casey Presentation

The City of Casey provides a generalist Youth Service for young people aged 10 to 25 years that live, work, study or have a strong link to the Casey community. Delia Murray, Youth Development Officer, presented an overview of processes and initiatives in City of Casey.

- Diversity in Casey:
 - 35 km from Melbourne, growth corridor, accessible to Melbourne
 - Large area (400 km²)
 - 51,518 young people 10-25 y.o.
 - 150 languages
 - 30% residents born overseas
 - 21.9% speak countries where English is not the first language
 - Sri Lanka, India, New Zealand, Mauritius, Phillipines, Afghanistan
 - Faiths include Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Islam, Hindu, Sikh and Bahai
- Casey Youth Services: Youth participation and access framework; community strengthening; improve participation of young people in community life
- In 2001, we developed our youth strategy (2001-2011) – enabling, listen, provide services, build social capital. However, in 2001 there was no mention of CLD communities. We didn't have the rapid growth of multiculturalism before this time.

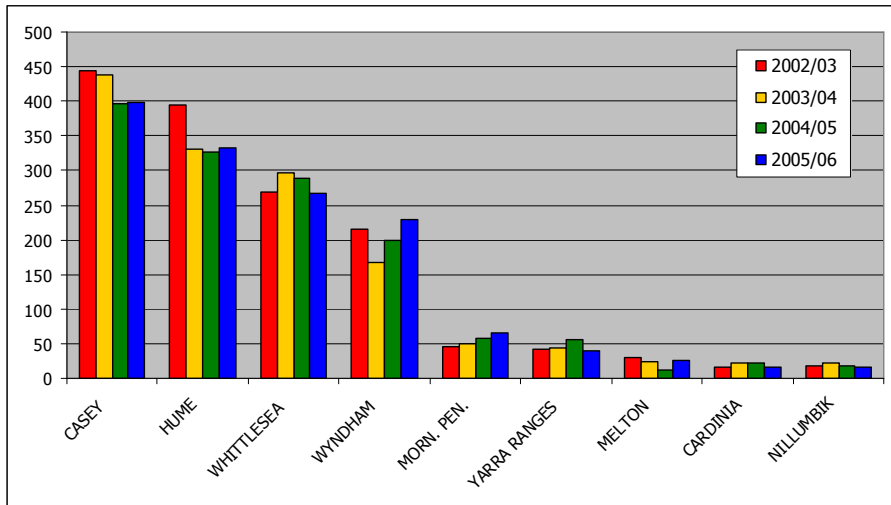
- 2002-2006. Discussions, observations, lack of CLD participants (Youth Strategy) – workers were referring to MRC because not sure how to engage. A bit of a fear factor, fear of unknown.
- CMYI targeted Casey as area of growing need and provided support with how to engage CLD communities.
- Formed partnerships with MRC and CMYI. Very few services/agencies working with CLD. Most were in Dandenong, and communities were travelling there to access services (AMES, etc)
- SCYACA Multicultural Mentor Project (SERMRC) – we linked newly arrived with established young people – Doveton SC – purely recreational. Exchanging information, developing friendships.
- We were taking very small steps to begin with. This initial mentoring program led to SFYS funding to run a Multicultural Friendship Group during & after school (CMYI & SERMRC). The role of the teacher was very important for engaging young people and sustaining involvement. Hampton Park SC eMerge group was very successful, particularly due to hard work of welfare coordinator. Because group was so successful, it was re-funded for further 6 months.
- We also had cultural specific training for youth services staff & community (CMYI)
- Roundtable Youth Related Statewide Agencies
- Community consultations
- Youth Development Officer seconded to CMYI to implement parts of action plan
- Translation of Youth Services brochures (20 languages)
- Developed Action Plan
 - Task 1: Local Government Roundtable, Friday 29 April 2005, CMYI Melbourne
 - Task 2: Youth Forum for CLD Young People, Friday 13 May 2005, at City of Casey Council Chambers, Narre Warren
 - Task 3: Cultural Awareness Training for CYS, Staff & Youth Related Agencies
- Multicultural Youth Programs Officer
 - develop & deliver a range of programs & activities targeting CLD young people.
 - Support CLD & other community agencies with implementation of youth programs & activities across the municipality
 - Policies, standards for delivery of youth services
 - Participate in implementation of Casey Youth Strategy and Casey Refugee & Culturally Diverse Youth Action Plan
 - Actively support Casey's Youth Services Purpose to work in partnership with the community to create a safe, supportive environment... etc
- Challenges:
 - It takes time: Be patient (it won't happen overnight but it will happen)!
 - How do you get to know and understand your CLD communities?
 - You don't need to understand every culture
 - What networking methods work best?
 - How to get families/communities on side?
 - Provide cultural awareness training for staff (attitudes)
 - Staff to take responsibility for culturally inclusive practices in their program areas.

CMYI PRESENTATION

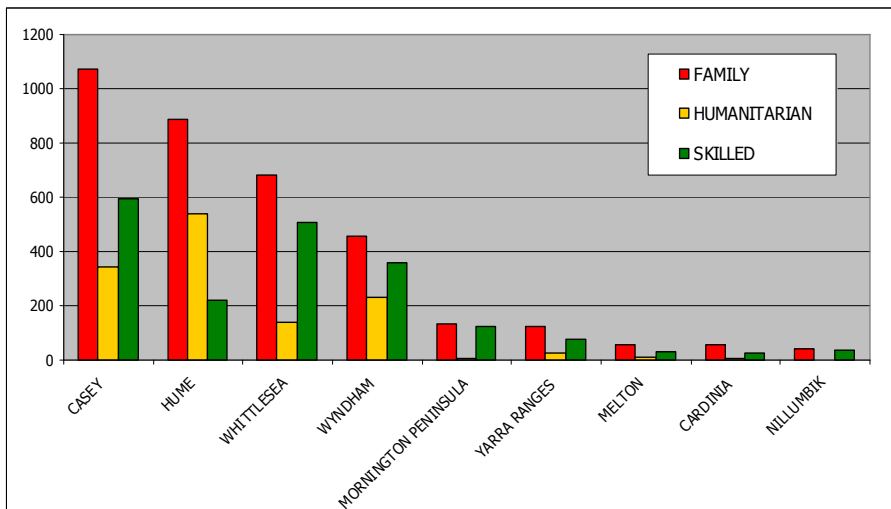
Diana Amato presented statistics around settlement of CLD young people in interface areas and highlighted why this work is important/needed in areas of growth in outer metropolitan area.

- Young people isolated, likelihood that refugee and migrant young people will be further marginalised and isolated in interface areas

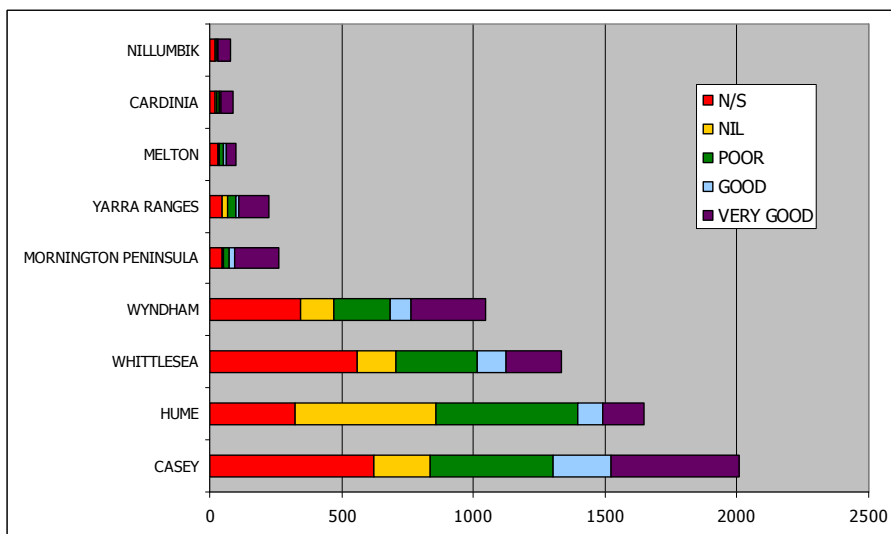
13-25 year olds who settled in interface LGAs, 2002/03–05/06 (change over time)



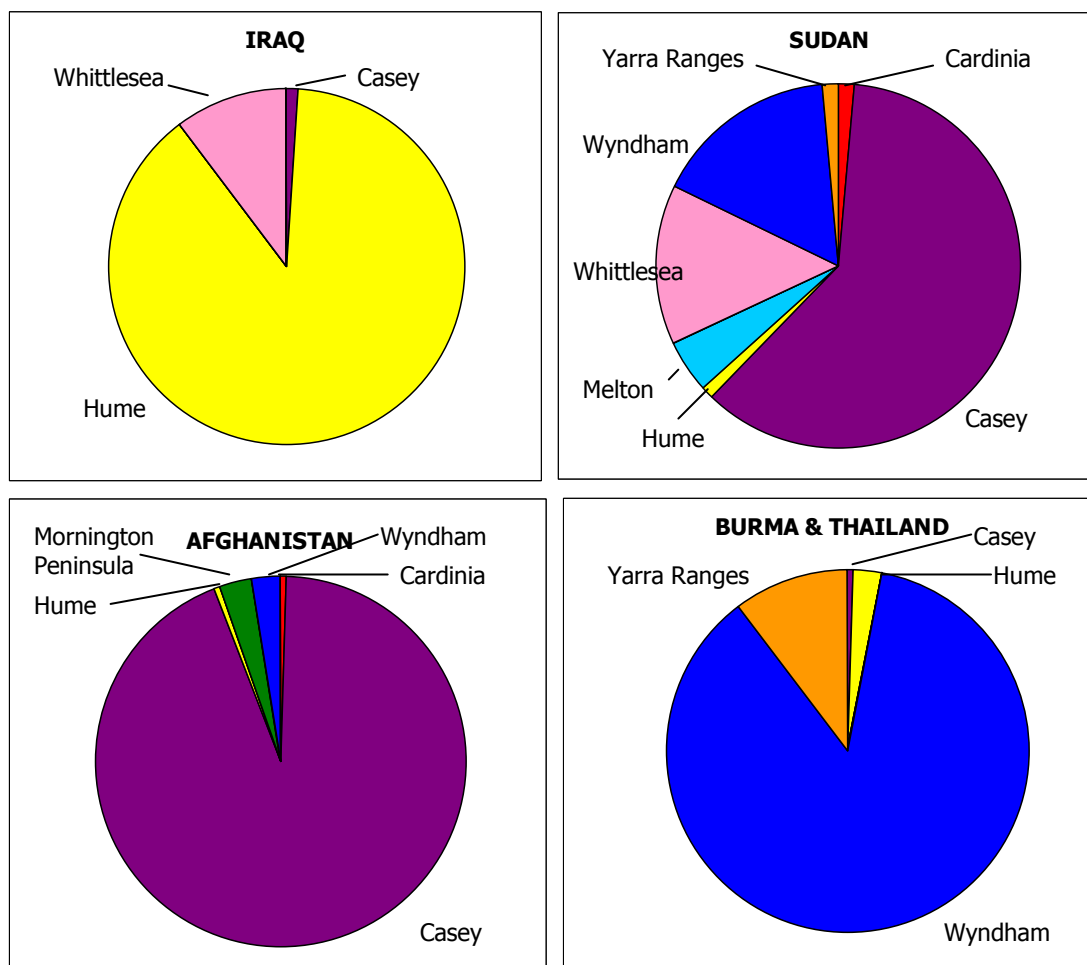
13-25 year olds who settled in interface LGAs between 2002-2007 by visa type



13-25 y.o. who settled between 2002-07 by English proficiency level (on arrival)



Humanitarian youth arrivals (13-25 yrs) by country of birth (Top 5) in interface LGAs, 2002-2007



For more statistics go to:

- Populations Diversity in Local Councils in Victoria – 2006 Census (VMC website)
- Department of Immigration and Citizenship – Online Settlement Database
- Your local council website on demographic characteristics of the local population
- 2006 Population Census
- Regionally based Migrant Resource Centre's

Living on the Edge (summary report of - Staying Connected, 2006)

- 46% of Victoria's population growth happened in interface council areas over the last 5 years and that trend is projected to continue.
- Distance, spread of population, transport issues and the time it takes to get around present real challenges to effective service delivery
- Some of our most vulnerable and at-risk young people are those who increasingly bear the brunt of these challenges

Staying connected: Solutions for addressing service gaps for young people living at the interface (September, 2006)

Recommendation 8: *That the state and federal government provide adequate resources to meet the needs of the more disadvantaged young people in the community: Aborigine and*

Torres Strait Islanders, CALD, particularly refugee young people. These resources need to focus on:

- Identifying the specific needs of these young people; and
- Working with these young people, their families and specific communities to develop services and approaches which will address their particular needs.

Local Government Guide – CMYI 2007

1. Background information: The refugee and migrant experience, resettlement in Australia and why target young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.
2. Audit Tool: Culturally responsive audit tool to assess the involvement of young people in services and programs
3. Strategies for greater engagement of refugee and migrant young people: Explores various steps and strategies in planning for the greater engagement of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in local government services
4. Local government case studies: Examples of good practice models in local government – City of Casey and Shepparton and Cobram
5. Programs that work: Examples of programs that various local councils have run that have been successful in engaging young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds
6. Additional resources: useful resources and weblinks

Some quotes...

"We are all more than ready to jump (when it comes to participating in sport), but we don't know how to jump. We just need someone to approach us and ask us to join in"

- Karen Burmese young man, 18 (through an interpreter)

"We have 200-300 young people in our community who have no plans; their diaries are empty. They're just waiting for an opportunity to participate in a regular activity."

- Chitlu Wyn, Foundation House (Karen Burmese Community)

"...often programs that run are short-term and are reactive to what's going on in a community. So if there's a problem agencies will come in and run a program for a few months or years, and then leave. But the need for that activity is ongoing."

- Youssef Mohamed (Organiser African Cup)

Playing for the future (CMYI 2007)

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Participants broke into 5 small groups to brainstorm four questions. The following are responses (Numbers in brackets indicate the number of small groups who included the same issue/suggestion).

1. What are the barriers impacting on young people from refugee or migrant backgrounds in accessing services in interface areas?

- Transport (5)
- Language barriers – lack and use of interpreters/translators (5)
- Not knowing how to navigate services; knowledge of available services is poor (4)
- Financial difficulties (3) – Centrelink entitlements not enough, pressure on young people to get jobs
- Services not having confidence and not knowing how to respond/ communicate, not knowing what to do (2)
- Age-group programs not appropriate or sensitive (responsibilities of young people not accounted for) – (2)

- Cultural barriers, parent engagement/communication (2)
- Understanding and fear of services (due to past experiences)
- Parent issues around safety
- Mental health issues, PTSD, lack of support
- Torture/trauma, loss and grief
- Other priorities/priorities of family – surviving/getting by
- Adapting to live in new country
- Foreign concepts (i.e. no word for social/youth worker in some languages)
- YP and families understanding of welfare – overcoming fear of agencies and services.
- Lack of services
- Fear of losing your culture
- Young people and family fears around confidentiality
- Gender expectations
- Not knowing things
- “Government” (people in uniforms) are intimidating and scary
- Cultural insensitivity of workers
- Young people having lots of responsibilities – having time to participate
- Intergenerational conflict

2. What are the challenges for interface council workers and partner agencies in engaging with newly arrived young people?

- Under-resourced, lack of funding in general. (3)
- No sustainable funding models (3)
- Countering stereotypes and negative media (3)
- Hard to track community leaders/key people (2)
- Involving CLD newly arrived communities
- Building rapport with communities takes time and resources
- High expectations of newly arrived communities
- Lack of directory of multicultural leaders/groups
- Council challenge – we’re generalist, we’re stepping into breach where there isn’t services – but not getting appropriate funding
- Delays in funding
- Organisation’s agendas and recognising the importance of working with CLD young people, which will hopefully feed down to programs and services
- Competitive funding context
- Working across municipal boundaries – leaders are in Dandenong, but community living in Whittlesea. How do we work across these boundaries?
- Lack of flexibility, too many boundaries, workers’ boundaries
- On-going commitment from partnerships, following through
- More clear expectations from organisations, workers and young people
- Lack of education
- Language - Lack of translated information. Need for oral information.
- Federal/State funding allocation
- Cultural sensitivity/training for generalist workers
- Adapting to new waves of migrants (different political environments, etc)
- Running appropriate activities for age groups, particularly newly arrived/refugee who want to do different kinds of things
- Linking mainstream and CLD communities – integrating
- Lack of representation of emerging communities on committees/ management/ planning, and leaders being over-committed and under-paid/ not recognised for their contributions. Burnout.
- How to make links with communities – “find them”
- Adopting culturally appropriate practices that are different to mainstream
- Involving the disengaged newly arrived
- Equipping workers with confidence, knowledge and skills
- Empowering young people in managing life here can distort power relationships between young people and parents – threatens respect

3. What are examples of effective strategies in engaging newly arrived young people in interface council areas?

- Building relationships/rapport/trust with community (3)
- Providing opportunity for young people to be heard; giving young people opportunity to be actively involved in the community, doing something they enjoy (2)
- Workers being flexible, flexible delivery of services (2)
- Seek out hubs and elders (e.g. churches) (2)
- Celebrating culture (2) – cross cultural celebrations, festivals
- Making your face familiar
- Educating parents and families (e.g. family day)
- Inclusive activities for the entire family
- Engaging families
- Linking young people into other programs and organisations
- Spread out, long term intervention
- Pre-engagement activities e.g. what is sport? What is a uniform?
- Providing education to other community organisations that are not aware of cultural diversity issues
- Professional development for staffing continued
- Teachers are powerful force for connection into communities (well respected)
- Raising awareness of what's available
- Mentoring
- Friendship networks – building bridges between newly arrived and established communities. Integration.
- Working with ESL teachers/coordinators
- Employing bi-lingual staff
- Informal BBQ/Dinner to bring people together
- Working with schools
- Using a range of strategies to engage young people – e.g. sports (soccer), street surfer bus (mobile youth activities/workers), touring services
- Sharing what works/doesn't work – this is problematic when services are competitive
- Well respected workers/reputation is so important – young people will travel to access these (e.g. Abdi Aden)
- Evaluating programs, why we're doing what we're doing – reflective practice.
- Conducting needs assessments
- Gender specific workers/roles/activities
- Sandwich effect – engaging young people, engaging elders/leaders, engaging families in order to develop successful initiatives
- Pay community leaders/elders/young people to be involved in focus groups and planning in recognition of their skills, knowledge, status

4. What other planning/ responses/ interventions/ strategic policies are needed to increase the participation of young people from refugee or migrant backgrounds in interface council services?

- Open forum with community agencies, needs of their community
- Realistic timeframes for young people to be involved – being culturally sensitive
- Funding security
- Working with other agencies – forum/network – lots of research into what young people would like, but need to get agencies together to see what we can deliver in a coordinated way.
- Need to advocate strongly that resources go to secondary growth areas, which includes largely interface councils, so funding happens more equitably to interface.
- Plan ahead
- Be flexible
- "Active" networking
- Network (linking into existing networks)
- Dedicated workers

- Evaluation within agencies
- Evidence based practice
- Needs analysis – “What do young people want?”
- Keep updating programs
- Information from other agencies (reports, research)
- Be resourceful
- Attitudes to multiculturalism/diversity within Australian community and the impact on newly arrived communities
- Increase in positive media
- Increase education on emerging cultures to larger population
- Transport
- Strength-based approach
- Mapping existing services/networks
- Under-representation of CLD community members in planning – paying community leaders, being flexible in ensuring their involvement
- Local government building paths to open doors with schools
- Transport connections
- Changing perceptions
- Using music/dance/performance/visual arts – working with council, engaging parents in leading arts/cultural projects
- Cross cultural awareness training
- Having cultural workers
- Participation in settlement groups (networking, funding for targeted workers)
- Buying a second hand car – information for young people/families around VicRoads (registration), insurance, police, RACV (basic car maintenance), credit
- Policy makers need to understand cultures – how they work and what’s appropriate

Fear and trust are recurring themes in responses to these questions from different groups.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

RECOMMENDATIONS TO BE CARRIED FORWARD:

- That there needs to be increased recognition of how newly arrived groups settle, organise and network across, Local Government Areas, especially in Interface Councils. This has implications for Councils and other providers to work in partnership across municipal boundaries and for funders to support these initiatives.
- That in response to the young age profile of refugees and newly arrives communities that this needs to be reflected through an increase of settlement resources targeted at youth settlement strategies.
- Mary Scully from DIAC suggested people contact local settlement planning committees to feed in needs – can email identified needs – which will inform priorities for DIAC Settlement Grants Program.
- CMYI will write up report on the roundtable and email to participants.
- A follow-up forum will be held in 2008.
- Services can download CMYIs *Inclusive Local Government Guide* from CMYI website: www.cmyi.net.au/AllCMYIPublications#I

ATTENDANCE

- Abdi Aden (City of Whittlesea)
- Alana Chantry (Brimbank Youth Services YMCA)
- Alison Hesechle (New Hope MRC)
- Anna Hughes (DIAC)
- Anthony Lai (Hume City Council)
- Bianca Pagnin (Kildonan)
- Celia Wigzell (Brimbank City Council)
- Charlie Moukbel (Hume City Council)
- Dave Collett (Western LCP)
- Deilia Murray (City of Casey)
- Dhammika Fernando (AMEP, Victoria University)
- Diana Amato (CMYI)
- Dianne Snowden (Wyndham City Council)
- Eliza Costigan (Catholic Education Office)
- Erin Clarke (Wyndham City Council)
- Fadima Aden (City of Whittlesea)
- Fran Linardi (City of Whittlesea)
- Grace Gonzalez (Kildonan)
- Graeme Angus (Anglicare)
- Jackie Buckley-Foster (Bridges ACP)
- Josie Failla (Melton Shire Council)
- Karen Milgram (Gambler's Help Western)
- Kerry Gemmell (Brimbank Youth Services YMCA)
- Kristy Riley (Gambler's Help Western)
- Libby Henstock (CMYI)
- Lisa Caruana (Bridges ACP)
- Louise Olliff (CMYI)
- Mary Scully (DIAC)
- Michelle Lalor (Wyndham City Council)
- Michelle MacDonald (Whittlesea Community Connections)
- Pam McKenzie (Catholic Education Office)
- Paul Papadatos (Kildonan)
- Philippe Roussel (Whittlesea Community Connections)
- Phill Start (City of Casey)
- Pori Peter (New Hope MRC)
- Rebecca Nativo (Kildonan)
- Reece Cocks (MFB)
- Renee Fedoruk (Hume City Council)
- Renee Rizio (Brimbank Youth Services YMCA)
- Rob Nansen (Reconnect West)
- Sarah Halls (Reconnect West)
- Sarah van den Berg (Kildonan)
- Sue Waddell (Caroline Springs College)
- Susan Harris (Anglicare Werribee)
- Tania Sacco (Western LCP)
- Tegan Rennick (Australian Red Cross)
- Tricia Fidli (Western LCP)
- Vicky Fisher (AMES Settlement)
- Wiliya Aden (City of Whittlesea)
- Yanping Xu (Consumer Affairs Victoria)