

**WORKING WITH YOUNG
MEN IN VICTORIA**
with a CLD focus

Setting the agenda on multicultural youth issues

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1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This document provides an initial overview regarding the provision of services to address the needs of young men living in Victoria with a CLD and refugee focus.

This overview comprises of four sections, the first providing an overview, with the second stating some of the identified issues raised by workers in the sector, anecdotal evidence and some research. Section three explores potential strategies for addressing these issues. The final section identifies some of the key stakeholders who possess expertise, experience and knowledge in this area. The fourth section offers some recommendations and identifies factors for consideration in the development of a statewide initiative.

It should also be noted however, that the organisation's program and advocacy activities focus primarily on working with refugee and newly arrived young people, their families and their communities during the settlement process and beyond. At this point in time, CMYI's work does not specifically focus on young men. Rather, in its advocacy role and direct service to clients issues particular to this group have arisen. CMYI has been alerted to these issues by the sector and in its observations and direct work with groups of young men and individual young men, as part of its usual client intake.

Migrant and Refugee Young Men Young Men

Interestingly, during the period of 30/09/1997 to 30/09/2005, the settlement data available suggests that the intake figures based on the total migration stream, is comparatively equal for male and female entrants. However, further inquiry reveals that for the same period, particular groups have a disproportionately high male to female ratio. The Sudanese and Afghani community intake for this time frame is evidence of this disproportionality. For example, the total number of Afghani men that settled in Australia were 6,276, compared with 4,522 women and girls. Focussing specifically on young people, in the ages groups of 10-19 there were 1,853 young men and boys compared with 1,308 young women and girls entering into the country. In the age group just above of 20-29, the figures are quite startling with 1,849 young men to only 938 young women. (DIMIA Settlement Data Base)

The Sudanese community has been experiencing a similar occurrence with its settler figures. The total number of men for the same eight year period was 9,985 compared to 7,920 women. In the age group of 10-19 there were 2,776 young men and boys entering Australia compared to 2,000 young women and girls. The following age group of 20-29 there were 2,270 young men and only 1,865 young women. (DIMIA Settlement Data Base)

These figures reveal the potential for significant detrimental implications for these groups of young men, and indeed for their particular communities and the broader society in which they are placed. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that there are other communities facing these issues and that the full impact of gender disproportionality may not be experienced in the initial stages of settlement, but in years and even generations to come.

Overview

The observations recorded in this document are the views of both the staff and management of the organisation and are based on more than 12 years experience of working with refugee and newly arrived young people, their families and their communities living in the state of Victoria.

The document is divided into four parts:

1. Introduction
2. Issues and their Impact on Young Men
3. Strategies for Working with Young Men
4. Conclusion

1.2 The Organisation: Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI)

The *Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues* (CMYI) is a statewide community based organisation that aims to strengthen and build innovative partnerships between young people, support services and the community to enhance life opportunities for young people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds living in Victoria. The centre has a priority focus on young people from refugee and newly arrived communities.

CMYI represents a range of individuals and organisations from CLD communities, government and non-government organisations with a commitment to improving the social and personal status of young people from CLD backgrounds.

Originally established in 1988, CMYI operates within an inclusive framework involving youth agencies, migrant and refugee communities, government and non-government organisations. Key service areas include:

- *Support to the Sector:* support provided to youth groups/organisations, newly arrived migrant and refugee communities and service providers;
- *Liaison with Government and NGO's:* communicating with government and non-government sectors on trends and issues impacting on CLD young people;
- *Policy Development:* contributing to state and federal government policies on newly arrived migrant and refugee young people;

- *Cross Cultural Resources*: developing cross cultural resources for the government and non-government sectors;
- *Managing Programs*: managing and providing innovative programs targeting newly arrived migrant and refugee young people;
- *Research*: undertaking research on multicultural youth issues;
- *Information Dispersal*: undertaking community education and sector support on cross cultural issues affecting young people from newly arrived migrant and refugee backgrounds.

1.3 Relevant CMYI Work in this area

While CMYI undertakes advocacy and consultation work in partnership with refugee and newly young people, their families and their communities, some work exploring the issues of second generation young people has been undertaken. This work primarily focused on identity issues.

Refugee Youth Pathways Program

- This program provides information and support services to 'at risk' refugee and newly arrived young people aged 15 to 21 in the Northern, Western and South-Eastern regions of metropolitan Melbourne. The program is designed to enable young people to access pathways to education, training and employment opportunities.
- *Reconnect Young Refugee's Program*
 - This program provides an early intervention service for refugee young people aged 12 to 18 who have recently left home or are at risk of homelessness. Combining service provision with community development strategies, the program aims to improve the level of engagement of young people with family, work, education, training and the community. The program incorporates action research with family centred approaches and culturally appropriate service delivery. The program is based in the Northern and South-Eastern regions of metropolitan Melbourne.
- *CMYI Statewide Network Meetings*
 - The purpose of the CMYI Statewide Network meetings is to provide a regular forum in which workers who are engaged with CLD young people have the opportunity to meet and share information. Workers with specialised skills and knowledge impart current information about their experiences to their colleges. Individual participants are also given the chance to network with other participants in the field.
 - CMYI facilitates the Statewide Network Meetings on a quarterly basis. The meetings give support to workers; placing value on their contribution and enriching their work by providing a mechanism for potential partnerships and collaborative work.

1.4 March 2005. CLD Young Men and the Impact of Violence

The topic for the first Statewide Meeting of 2005 was CLD young men and the impact of violence. Through its sector development work, CMYI identified this issue as an area requiring more discussion and examination within the sector. The meeting explored these broad areas for discussion:

- The impact of violence on CLD young men
- The factors leading to aggressive behaviour
- The setting in which it occurs
- Whether aggressive behaviour occurs differently for CLD young men in comparison to other young people
- The settlement factors that result in CLD youth aggression

CMYI involved the sector in framing a discussion on the issue that will eventuate in the documentation of key strategies and recommendations later in the year. CMYI invited Santina Perrone from Crime Prevention Victoria; to provide a brief overview of the research produced by CPV.

Outcomes:

- Successful programs and good practice were shared, strengthening networks and work practice in this area.
- CMYI will produce a discussion paper on the issue.

2. Background

2.1 CLD Young People in Victoria: Demographic Overview

The population of Victoria consists of more than 25% of people from a CLD background. Young people between 16 and 24 years of age constitute almost one third of the total settler intake under Australia's Humanitarian Migration Program since 1996. Victoria settles almost one third of Australia's humanitarian youth settler arrivals. The top source countries for humanitarian youth arrivals in Victoria in 2000 were the Former Yugoslavia, Somalia, Iraq, Bosnia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Cambodia, Croatia, Eritrea and Afghanistan. From the period 1996 – 1999 there was an increase in Victorian humanitarian youth settler arrivals, from 2, 079 in 1996 – 1998 up to 1,300 new arrivals in 1999. (DIMA Settlement Database 2001).

According to the 1996 Census, 9% of Australians aged between 12 and 25 were born in a non-English speaking country. More than 15% of young Australians reported speaking a language other than English at home. The main source of countries for young people born overseas and living in Victoria are Vietnam, UK, New Zealand, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Indonesia (including East Timor). The main languages other than English that young Victorians spoke at home were Italian, Greek, Chinese languages, Vietnamese, Arabic and Macedonian. While these figures provide a useful snapshot there are some deficiencies in that data on country of birth does not accurately reflect cultural identity. Another area of concern is the failure to account for first generation CLD young people.

There have been also been recent significant shifts in migration patterns to Victoria. While the late 1980's and early 1990's was characterised by large numbers of humanitarian youth arrivals from Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, including a significant proportion of unaccompanied minors, the 1990's were characterised by a shift in the migration program to settling more migrants from Europe and Africa. As migration patterns shift and change, specific issues arise according to the needs of the particular group of newly arrived young people. Common social policy issues remain constant however for government and service agencies seeking to enhance the life opportunities of newly arrived and refugee young people. These include the issues of homelessness, education, social health, employment and training.

2.2 Issues and their Impact on Young Men

Culture and gender relations

Anecdotally, culture and gender relations seem to be the major catalyst for violent or inappropriate behaviours from young men. Any approach implemented needs to address this issue and support young men to develop and navigate complex issues such as relationships, masculinity, sexuality and identity. The term 'culture' is used broadly to represent environments such as school, sport and community settings, as well as, those relating to a young man's sense of cultural identity.

Conflict resolution and Anger Management

Current approaches seem homogenous and address issues from one cultural perspective. Addressing the issue requires a more culturally aware framework that adds value to existing programs.

Bullying

Current programs in schools do not address the issues of working with young men. A long-term integrated and dynamic model is necessary to meet the needs of all young men living in Victoria.

Sector response

In the past, working with young men was well resourced and popular. The opposite is true today. The numbers of male youth workers are dwindling and fewer still are being trained in this area. There is a vacuum of appropriate services to this client group and a lack of male role models. More recently, services have adopted approaches and models that have inadvertently resulted in young men's issues being pushed to the periphery. Anecdotal evidence has shown that this has been detrimental to the health and well-being of young men, contributing to the social isolation and the violent acting out of issues.

Research

More research focussing on CLD and refugee young men is needed. Significant work needs to be undertaken in the area of scoping, documenting and identifying programs that work effectively with young men in Australia and overseas, with a CLD and refugee focus.

3. Strategies

3.1 Potential Strategies for Working with Young Men, with a CLD Focus

Based on the experience and opinions of the organisation, its policy and program workers, and information and expertise from CMYI networks, the sector and young men themselves; CMYI advocates for the development and support of the following strategies:

3.2 Working with Young Men: Settings

- This approach is a broad based program delivery model, with a built-in evaluation and research component.
- Modules would be developed and some adapted from existing programs to focus more on the needs of CLD and refugee young men.
- This approach would address working with young men within the settings where violent behaviours have been well documented, in schools, sport and community.
- All young men in Victoria schools would be engaged from late primary (grades 5 and 6) through to VCE. Research and significant work will be done with CLD young men, second and third generation young men. Programs designed to explore issues of identity and the positive expressions of masculinity.
- More broadly, young men between the ages of 11-25 need to be targeted, through a variety of intergrated strategies that suits both their needs and level of engagement in school, community and sport.
- Schools will take a whole of school approach to the issue.
- Young men would be engaged in programs delivered through sport, VIC Health will specifically target CLD young men in its delivery of services.
- The community setting would be a critical aspect of the program seeking to engage young men who are disconnected and disengaged from school and positive pathways. Existing programs and community resources such as FREEZA and YMCAs could be utilised.
- The community component of the strategy would rely on a partnerships established with LGAs.
- Pilot programs in areas such in the South East, North, Western regions and Sheperton. Pilot programs to run for two years. Research and information obtained, to be implimented into a Statewide approach to addressing the issue. The programs themselves need to be implemented in a number of areas identified by an advisory group, on an on-going basis.
- Newly arrived and established communities, and community agencies must be included to ensure that young people are appropriately involved, as part of an advisory group.

3.3 Working with Young men: A National Symposium

- The symposium would address the issue of working with young men with a focus on CLD young men.
- Participants would comprise of leading Australian academics in the area from Victoria and inter-state.
- The symposium would be the basis for developmental work in this area, producing research based program concepts and outcomes.
- The symposium would be linked to an academic institution (RMIT, Swinburne).

3.4 Working with Young Men: Community Sector Capacity Building

- This model addresses a sector response to the issue.
- The response from the sector can be limited at best due to small numbers of men in the industry.
- This approach would promote youth work as a career option for young men and seek to remedy industrial issues and legitimise it as a viable option.
- This model would also seek to target CLD and refugee young men as youth workers. Increasing the capacity of these particular groups to facilitate the needs of young men within their community as well as on a broader level.
- This model would also invest in a partnership with LGAs to ensure that there were legitimate supportive pathways for young men wanting to engage in youth work.

4. Key Stakeholders

4.1 Working with Young Men: Key Stakeholders

Currently there are a few models and programs delivered particularly in schools that address issues such as family violence, bullying, harassment and communication. These programs have made some inroads into dealing with these particular issues; however, fall short when addressing young men and violence on all levels.

Also, these programs address young men as a homogenous group and come from an ethnocentric perspective. These approaches often neglect the complexities of identity and the cultural formation of young people.

Any initiative that wanted to work better with young men should involve groups who have been engaged in this area. Some of the groups who have a wealth of expertise in working with young men include:

NO to Violence

Activities

The range of activities undertaken by NTV include:

- Provision of telephone, counselling, information and referral service for men wishing to change and end their use of violence towards family members
- Support and development of men's behaviour change programs
- Development and provision of training, resources and information
- Data development and analysis
- Education and information provision
- Provision and Support of research
- Contribution to policy development
- Service sector advocacy and leadership. ▲

Program focussed groups* which are of limited duration, and which aim to assist men to change their violent behaviour, attitudes and control over women and children.

These groups have:

- professional facilitators
- a closed membership with an intake and screening process conducted by group facilitators
- a structured sequential program of which it is important not to miss component sessions
- a curriculum with core topics and a range of other possible areas to cover depending on time and appropriateness

- a high degree of education and also a high degree of challenging; and
- a high degree of direction from facilitators.

These groups are designed to provide what men need at the beginning of the change process. This includes educational material about violence in general as well as challenging and support in beginning a personal process of acknowledgement and change. The topic of social action to prevent violence is discussed in these groups, but they do not focus on or provide a base for organising this. They focus on behaviour change and program content.

Ongoing support/discussion groups can be attended by men prior to, during or after a program focussed group. They aim to provide immediate support to men in crisis wanting to begin the change process, and to assist men who have completed a program focussed group to consolidate changes over time and continue the long term work of attitude and behaviour change.

They have:

- facilitators with appropriate skills. These can be suitable men who have been through a program who are not qualified professionals but who work with the support and supervision of professionals.
- an open membership
- no structured curriculum. Within a certain framework the groups are responsive to the needs of the men attending a given session.

These groups are able to form the basis for the development of men's skills and further work on themselves, in group work and in community education and social change.

White Lion

White lion supports young people to build better lives for themselves and helps make our community a more inclusive and safer place.

Whitelion has developed and delivered a range of programs and services to young people within the juvenile justice system, and upon their release has supported them during the difficult period of transition and (re)connection with family and community.

Employment Program

This program supports young women and men in real jobs for real wages. Both the employers and the young people involved in the program receive high-level ongoing support from White lion employment program staff.

Mentoring Program

The aim of the program is to promote purposeful voluntary relationships in which mentors assist at risk young people to develop a positive sense of self and useful connections with their community.

Carefully selected, trained and supported mentors form one-on-one relationships with young people, for whom a trusted and meaningful relationship can reduce personal isolation and contribute to self esteem, community and family connectedness, hope for a positive future and active engagement in pro-social achievement.

Sports Role Model Program

Sports people and other role models run activities with young people in the custodial centres as the basis for establishing relationships and encouraging healthy activities, often not experienced before. These relationships lead to participation in a range of community activities and build self-confidence.

Purple Room

The Purple Room is a post-release service which assists young women with their transition from custody into the community. The service aims to foster independence, community connectedness, and personal development.

Indigenous Programs

Developed in view of the over-representation of Indigenous young people in the Juvenile Justice system, this program ensures that Indigenous young people in custody and in targeted communities across the state can connect with positive Indigenous role models and mentors.

Dynamic Living Program

The Dynamic Living Program aims to encourage young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to take on sport as part of an active and healthy lifestyle. A joint initiative of MacKillop Family Services and Whitelion, the Dynamic Living Program creates opportunities for young people to take part in sport and be linked into recreation facilities within their own community in the western suburbs.

ROAR Program

Whitelion's community-based prevention program - the ROAR program (Real Original Amazing Role Models)- has been developed to target "at risk" children and young people from communities that statistically generate high numbers in the Juvenile Justice system. Regular visits are made throughout the year to eighteen schools and communities in rural Victoria, including Koori Open Door Education (KODE) schools, four metropolitan Melbourne schools and schools in Northern Tasmania.

Visiting and local role models use their own life stories and structured fun activities to address key issues such as bullying, early school leaving and truanting, family violence, poverty, drug and alcohol abuse and criminal activity. They inspire children and young people to think about decisions they need to make and offering practical strategies for implementing positive choices.

Crime Prevention Victoria

Crime Prevention Victoria (CPV) is an agency established to develop and implement a comprehensive crime prevention and anti-violence strategy and provide information and support on best practice models of crime prevention. In particular, CPV delivers on the State Government's policy of tackling crime and its causes. The focus is on targeted research and data analysis, information dissemination and evidence-based action.

Research shows that dysfunctional families, child abuse, low levels of education, unemployment, large income disparities, substance abuse, lack of adequate and affordable housing, and community breakdown are strongly linked to offending behaviour.

What works in crime prevention?

Three key lessons can be derived from crime prevention research:

1. Programs should be targeted to areas with a high incidence of crime.
2. It is often necessary to intervene in many domains simultaneously: the family, school, labour market, community and the justice system.
3. Neighbourhood-based programs are likely to be more effective if they include a flexible, balanced mix of situational and social crime prevention techniques

Links exist between school achievement, joblessness and criminal behaviour.

Support for children, families, and young people can prevent the development of anti-social and offending behaviours.

The risk of crime is increased in communities that do not include a heterogeneous mix of families, young people and older people, and where there are few meaningful opportunities for employment and recreation.

Partnerships between government agencies, business and community organisations are vital for ensuring links between crime prevention initiatives.

WIRE

WIRE's Women's Information Centre (WIC) provides face to face support, referrals and information from its premises in the heart of Melbourne. The organisation also offers telephone referral service and information is available through their website.

Individuals that possess particular knowledge in this area include:

- Santina Perrone CPV,
- David Ellis Swinburne University,
- Judith Bessant RMIT,
- Irene Verens, Vic Health,
- Diane Orlando Immigrant Women's Domestic Violence Service,
- Steve Wilson YSAS,
- Rob White,
- Chris Price, Darebin Community Health
- Carmel Guerra, Centre for multicultural Youth Issues.

A strategy for Working with young men, would involve all of the above in an advisory group capacity.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

There are a number of significant factors that need to be accounted for when conceiving a strategy to work with young men in Victoria, with a focus on CLD young men. Some of these factors include:

- The demographic make-up of Victoria; according to the 1996 Census, 9% of Australians aged between 12 and 25 were born in a non-English speaking country;
- The settlement trends of families and young people, and departmental settlement plan (rural settlement, the proportionately high number of young men compared with young women from particular communities);
- Issues particular to regional and rural areas; such as lack of transport, distance to centres, high unemployment, increased isolation.
- Gender considerations;
- Media, the portrayal of CLD young men in particular, has had an impact on the way the broader community view them.
- Political Factors, such as September 11 and the subsequent international and domestic response to it. The treatment of people seeking asylum in Australia.
- Post traumatic reactions to past refugee experiences which manifest in a number of negative outcomes, one of which may be the violence.
- Frustrations linked to a poor settlement experience, including, language barriers, limited educational/training options, isolation, and disconnected from community.
- Family issues, such as intergenerational conflict issues and the absence of traditional intergenerational support structures and role models.
- Cultural factors regarding appropriate behaviours and legal frameworks such as the 'common man', young men from CLD backgrounds will often react differently or more aggressively if a slanderous comment has been made about a female relative than their Australian counterparts.
- Identity issues, compounded by overt and institutional racism.
- And importantly, the impact of poor settlement and lack of opportunity on subsequent generations, children of poorly settled migrants and refugees are likely to experience the same frustrations and issues as their parents before them. For example, the Lebanese community, young men who were born in Australia are still experiencing racism, low levels of education retention, literacy issues, high unemployment etc.

5.2 Recommendations

- That young men between the ages of 11-25 need to be targeted, through a variety of integrated strategies that suits both their needs and level of engagement in school, community and sport.
- That young men from newly arrived and established communities be included and targeted.

- State government and Federal governments need to work collaboratively (Office for Youth, Department of Education, Vic Health and DIMIA) to formulate strategies that specifically address the needs of these young men.
- Settlement services need to work intensely with young people upon arrival.
- DIMIA need to focus on the long-term settlement needs of refugee young people in partnership with State governments.
- The Department of Education needs to include a CLD young men's strategy into its diversity framework for secondary schools and primary schools.
- VIC Health needs to specifically target CLD young men in its delivery of services.

No To Violence - NTV

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