INCLUSIVE ORGANISATIONS

A guide to good practice strategies for engaging young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds in services and programs.

cmy

CENTRE FOR
MULTICULTURAL YOUTH

ABOUT CMY

The Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) is a Victorian not-for-profit organisation supporting young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds to build better lives in Australia. CMY was established in 1988 and was the first organisation in Australia to work exclusively with migrant and refugee young people.

Our purpose is to ensure that young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds have every opportunity to succeed in Australia.

We believe diversity is a cornerstone of Australia's success. We believe respect for everyone's human rights is essential for a fair and equal society. We believe everyone should be able to feel like they belong and can participate fully.

Through a combination of specialist support services, training and consultancy, knowledge sharing and advocacy, we are working to remove the barriers young people face as they make Australia their home. Our activities include:

- providing direct one-to-one support for young people with family, housing, education and employment issues
- delivering leadership programs that offer young people opportunities to contribute to Australian society
- providing training, professional development and consultancy services for organisations to work more effectively with young people
- building research evidence and sharing our knowledge
- providing evidence-based policy advice and advocacy to decision makers at local, state and national levels.

Our activities supporting organisations to work more effectively with young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds have enabled us to develop a robust framework for embedding culturally inclusive approaches at all levels of organisational operation. We have applied and refined this framework over many decades of work with stakeholders across the youth and settlement sectors. Inclusive Organisations brings together this expertise into a good practice guide for organisations wanting to enhance their work with young people.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Introduction

It is the responsibility of all organisations, not only those with a specialised focus on migrant, refugee or multicultural communities, to ensure that young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds have access to the services and programs that all young people do.

There are often significant organisational barriers that can prevent young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds accessing services which may be of benefit to them. These culturally and linguistically diverse young people have specific needs that are distinct from their peers as well as those of adults in their own communities.

While some of these needs can be met by providing targeted programs and services (e.g. for a specific ethnic group or cohort of multicultural young people), it is not possible for targeted activities to meet all the needs of all young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds all of the time. As such, generalist[1] organisations must work to increase their inclusiveness and minimise factors that may act as barriers to participation in programs and services.

Inclusive Organisations provides a framework that organisations can utilise to improve their engagement with young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds and enhance good practice across their services and programs.

The framework includes eight good practice principles[2] and a range of accompanying strategies. Figure 1 provides a representation of these principles, which need to be founded upon strong organisational values and a leadership that promotes a culture of inclusiveness. At the centre of the framework are young people themselves, in recognition that their voices, experiences and strengths must inform all approaches to good practice.

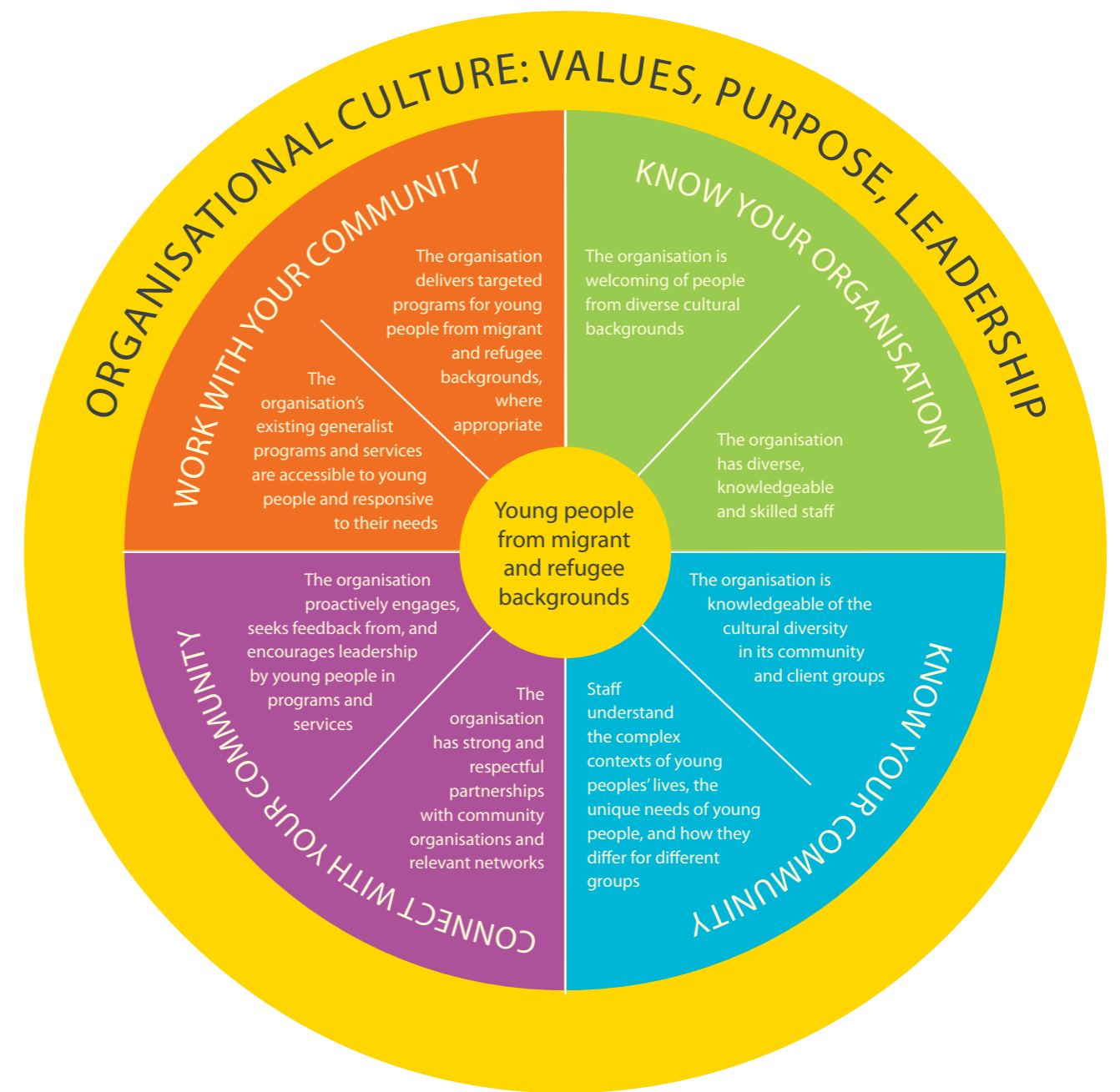## *i* Who are 'Young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds'?

This group includes young people who: were born overseas; were born in Australia and have family members such as a parent or grandparent born overseas; have had refugee or refugee-like experiences; and/or who consider themselves to be culturally and linguistically diverse to mainstream Australian young people.[3]

Inclusive Organisations focusses on organisations and the systems, processes and practices that are important for providing a culturally inclusive service. The guide does not cover in detail the cross-cultural challenges and settlement and migration issues that young people may experience. To learn more about these see:

- Youth Work with Young People from Migrant and Refugee Backgrounds (CMY, 2011) available from: http://www.cmy.net.au/publications/youth-work-young-people-refugee-and-migrant-backgrounds

- Youth Work in the Family Context (CMY, 2011) available from: http://www.cmy.net.au/publications/youth-work-family-context

- Young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, National Youth Settlement Framework Supplement (MYAN, 2015), available from: http://myan.org.au/resources-and-publications/121/

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1 In this context, generalist services are those that are available to all young people (whether youth-specific or otherwise) and which do not focus on a specific ethnic group, or multicultural community, etc.

2 Note that general youth work principles are not covered in detail in this guide as resources outlining these are available elsewhere. e.g. YACVIC Code of Ethical Practice http://www.yacvic.org.au/sector-info/yacvic-s-code-of-ethical-practice

3 See the Glossary at the end of this resource for more detail

Figure 1: Inclusive Organisations Good Practice Framework

Why become more inclusive?

When young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds are well connected to services, they are more likely to successfully:

- negotiate identity and independence during their transition to adulthood
- develop resilience and a sense of belonging, particularly in the face of discrimination, negative experiences and/or recent arrival to Australia
- navigate complex cultural differences between the country of their (or their parents') birth and mainstream Australian culture, including inter-generational differences in acculturation
- develop flexibility and adaptability to diverse cultural contexts
- maintain strong relationships with their families and communities
- develop strong relationships with peers and the broader community.

Young people who have been empowered through participation in inclusive organisations are better able to meaningfully participate in and contribute to Australian society throughout their lives. This promotes social cohesion and allows the broader community to benefit from the diverse perspectives, knowledge and skills of the whole population. (Conversely, when services are not accessible to certain groups in the population this can lead to further marginalisation of these groups.) Organisations can also benefit in this way, by capitalising on diverse ways of understanding and innovative ways of 'doing business'.

Organisations also have a social responsibility to become more inclusive. A fair and equal society, founded upon human rights principles, can only be realised when no groups are excluded, unintentionally or otherwise. However, young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds are too often under-serviced by generalist organisations, which can contribute to social exclusion. It is therefore essential that organisations work towards implementing culturally inclusive good practice.

Figure 2: Becoming more culturally inclusive can be beneficial for:

- The broader Australian community
- Organisations and service providers
- Individual young people, their families and coummunities

Implementing Good Practice

Improving engagement with young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds is necessarily a process of organisational change and development, in order to ensure service responses and programs are not tokenistic, ineffective or unsustainable.

Organisations are encouraged to reflect on their particular context and to incorporate strategies from this guide that are appropriate to organisational purpose and capacity.
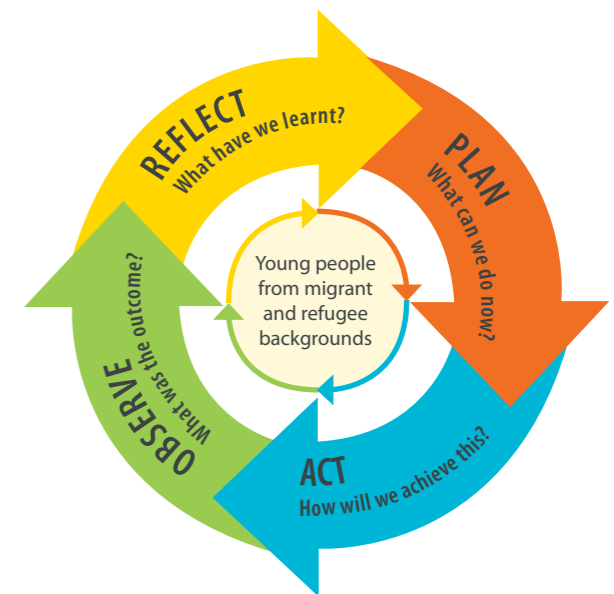
The Inclusive Organisations framework is presented as a circle (see Figure 1) to highlight that each good practice principle is an integral part of an inter-connected whole. While the guide outlines the strategies principle by principle, in reality, to achieve success many of the strategies will need to be implemented alongside complementary strategies from other principles.

Organisations should also recognise that implementing good practice is an ongoing process of reflection and improvement. Some strategies and approaches may be done 'now', while others will build upon these changes as the organisation becomes increasingly knowledgeable and skilled in working with this group of young people.

This is a similar process to many continuous quality improvement cycles, as Figure 3 represents. When considering organisational change aimed at improving engagement with young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, this cycle of improvement must be undertaken in conjunction with young people and their communities.

For organisations that do not have existing relationships with local multicultural young people, this level of participation early in the change process can be difficult to achieve. As such, a careful consideration of the strategies outlined, and how best they can be implemented concurrently to ensure young people's involvement as much as possible, is required.

Figure 3: Implementing good practice

REFLECT
What have we learnt?

PLAN
What can we do now?

Young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds

OBSERVE
What was the outcome?

ACT
How will we achieve this?

Organisational Culture: Values, Purpose, Leadership

The foundation of the good practice framework is organisational culture. This is because the practical strategies for implementing good practice will be most successful when they are supported by the values and purpose of the organisation and championed by a committed leadership.

Attempts to improve engagement with young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds often prioritise increasing staff understanding about diverse young peoples' cultural backgrounds. However, this approach in isolation fails to take into account the complex cross-cultural realities young people are navigating. Organisations have culture as much as young people do, and it is in the interaction between the two where successful engagement will occur.

> ### *i* What is culture?
>
> Culture incorporates our values, ethics and beliefs, which in turn influence how we understand, interpret, and respond to ourselves, other people and the world around us. These cultural values inform how we define our social roles, what we deem appropriate behaviour, our approaches to communication (language and non-verbal), how we form and maintain relationships, gender roles, family structure, and other factors that situate us organisationally in society.

There a number of factors which influence how inclusive an organisation's culture will be, as summarised in Figure 4.

Organisations are composed of the individuals working within them, who each bring their own cultural background to their work. Individuals can contribute to an inclusive organisation by improving their capacity to work in a culturally competent way.

> ### *i* What is Culturally Competent Youth Practice?
>
> Cultural competency is the attitudes, knowledge and skills of a practitioner that enables them to engage effectively with people who have a different cultural background to themselves. It requires openness to difference and skills in managing the dynamics of difference – that is, being able to recognise and negotiate differences when they arise, based on an in-depth understanding of how cultural values influence decisions, behaviours and communication. It also requires an understanding of, and sensitivity to, the complex inter-generational and/or pre- and post-settlement challenges that young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds experience.

An organisation's culture is also informed by its systems, processes and environments. Creating an inclusive organisational culture is not solely about writing a few policies or procedure documents. It requires an ongoing investment in actively promoting a culture which embraces, invests in, and operates according to, a broad diversity of cultures. In this context, it requires a highly dynamic and flexible service which can respond to the specific cultural understandings and needs of young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

Organisations also need to be aware that they operate in and are informed by the broader Australian mainstream culture. A generalist organisation's values, expectations, rules and ways-of-working tend to reflect they way most organisations in Australia operate. However, these environments can feel quite foreign and challenging to negotiate for young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

Furthermore, the way in which the broader community perceives and situates young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds can have a profound impact on how they understand themselves and their place in Australian society. This subsequently affects the ways in which young people feel welcomed, or not, at services and programs.

Figure 4: Influences on organisational culture
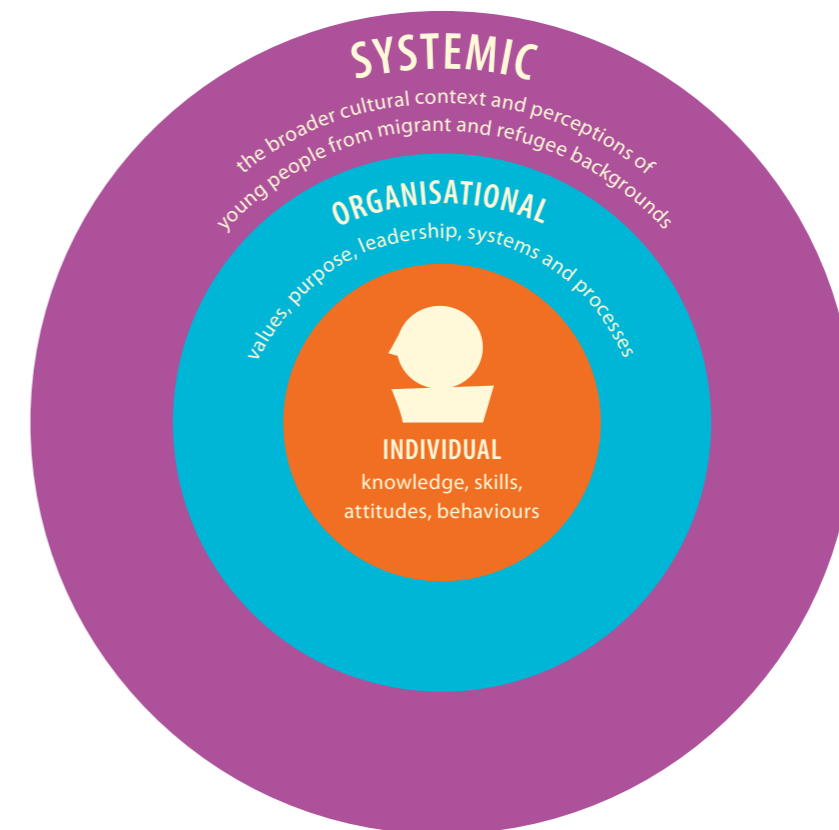
Strategies for building an inclusive organisational culture

VALUES

Developing a culture of inclusiveness requires organisations to critically reflect upon their values and behaviours. These include considering the organisation's openness to difference, willingness to embrace diverse ways of knowing and being, and commitment to non-discrimination and equity of service provision.

PURPOSE

Organisations need to consider how engagement with young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds is incorporated into the purpose of the organisation. This may require reflection upon guiding statements, such as those articulating the organisation's vision, mission or principles.

These inform decisions that are made at a process and practice level, which in turn creates visible and concrete actions that build inclusion through the day-to-day work of staff.

LEADERSHIP

Creating changes within an organisation at a cultural level can take time. It is essential that organisational leadership demonstrate the values of the organisation. It is also important that there is consistency and encouragement, and an ongoing commitment to continued implementation and improvement in all good practice areas.

Bringing good practice to life: Get Ready Youth Service

Throughout the guide we will follow a fictional youth organisation, Get Ready Youth Service, exploring how they went about implementing a few good practice strategies and the successes they achieved.

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE: VALUES, PURPOSE AND LEADERSHIP

Get Ready is a medium-sized, generalist youth service that offers practical supports like mentoring, training and job-ready assistance for young people seeking employment. Get Ready operates in the outer northern suburbs of Melbourne. They are keen to provide supports for young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds but are aware that only a few of their current clients seem to be from a 'culturally diverse' background.

The organisation's values are Choice, Equity and Integrity. The managers reviewed their value statements and realised that, while they apply to all the young people coming to their service, they did not clearly articulate a commitment to valuing the diversity of their clients. They updated the value statements and made an organisational priority for the coming year to review their current practices and invest in increasing their engagement with young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

Good Practice Principles and Strategies

KNOW YOUR ORGANISATION

Good Practice Principle: The organisation is welcoming of people from diverse cultural backgrounds

Organisations that promote a positive, respectful and supportive environment will be more welcoming for young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. Creating a welcoming environment means ensuring there is no tolerance for discrimination and promoting a sense of belonging for young people.
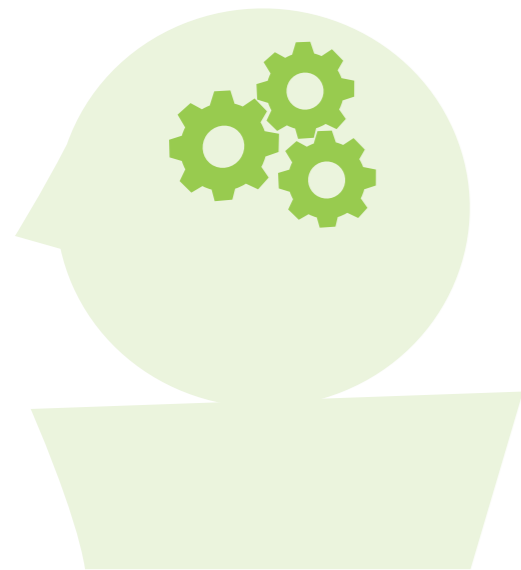
Strategies:

> Actively promote an organisational culture that is inclusive and respectful of the diversity within your staff, client group and community.

> Have anti-discrimination and/or cultural inclusion policies in place that staff are routinely made aware of (e.g. during induction or performance review processes) and ensure a culture of 'no tolerance' of any negative attitudes based on gender, race, religion, sexuality etc.

> Develop policies and procedures which articulate how your organisation's values will be implemented in practice.

> For example, if one of your organisation's values is 'participation of young people', you might introduce a procedure for including young people in the development process of new programs. This might include steps such as:

   • Staff design and draft the new program.
   • Young people review and provide input.
   • Management sign off.

> Ensure spaces such as reception areas or client rooms, and promotional materials and informational brochures, reflect the cultural diversity of the communities you engage with or wish to.

> For example, you might include images of young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds in materials, and ensure languages, religions, specific cultural needs, etc. are taken into consideration.

> Encourage all staff to promote a friendly and welcoming environment.

Good Practice Principle: The organisation has diverse, knowledgeable and skilled staff

In order for organisations to facilitate increased engagement and participation, a sound understanding of culture and settlement, and their influence on youth development, is necessary. However, there will likely be significant variation in the degree to which existing staff, including managers and volunteers, have experience and expertise in working with young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. All staff should participate in professional development in cultural competency in order to:

• ensure that individual staff-client interactions genuinely respond to the needs of young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds
• ensure that responding to cultural diversity is built into service and program design
• enhance the welcoming environment of the organisation
• contribute towards greater cohesion among culturally diverse staff members
• enhance the culture of the organisation by ensuring values are reflected in practice.

Working towards increasing the number of culturally diverse staff members can also contribute to an inclusive organisational culture by providing diverse perspectives and understandings. Furthermore, when young people see staff from their own communities, they are more likely to feel that the organisation is a place where they belong.

Strategies:

ALL STAFF TRAINING

> Provide opportunities for training and professional development in cultural competency and working with young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds for all staff, including managers and volunteers.

> Encourage continued up-skilling for staff who are client facing or project orientated and who are regularly required to work with young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds (eg. supporting their attendance at relevant network meetings).

> Where relevant, provide opportunities for professional development in responding to specific challenges some young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds may face.

> For example, responding to forced marriage, working with LGBTQI young people, working with young people with caring responsibilities, working with young people with experiences of trauma and torture, unaccompanied minors, etc.

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i **What does good training look like?**

Cultural competency training should include:
• an exploration of what culture is and how it defines our values and behaviours
• an exploration of one's own cultural identity
• an exploration of differences in communication styles across cultures and how these influence our perceptions and interpretations of behaviour and communication in others
• development of skills in working flexibly across cultures including managing the dynamics of difference
• an exploration of the challenges facing young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds including pre- and post-settlement experiences.

The Centre for Multicultural Youth offers training in Culturally Competent Youth Practice which covers these topics. For more information visit: http://cmy.net.au/topic/training

Interpreter training in best-practice processes for working with interpreters may also be beneficial if staff are regularly required to engage an interpreter service. Training can be provided by the Translating and Interpreter Service (https://www.tisnational.gov.au) or the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) (https://www.naati.com.au)

Depending on your client group, it may also be useful for staff to undergo training in trauma-informed approaches to working with young people from refugee backgrounds, such as that delivered by members of the Forum of Australian Services for Torture and Trauma (http://fasstt.org.au/members/)

> Ensure (or work towards ensuring) that the cultural diversity of your organisation's staff, managers and volunteers reflects the cultural diversity of your clients and communities.

> Implement culturally inclusive hiring policies and practices.

For example, you might:

• include statements in job advertisements that your organisation is an equal opportunity employer and/or encourages applications from culturally and linguistically diverse candidates

• ensure that job advertising occurs through a range of networks, including those specific to multicultural communities (see the Connect With Your Community section)

• include key attributes relating to cultural inclusiveness and understanding of multicultural communities in key selection criteria and statements of commitment to organisational values

• implement practical strategies to support prospective staff who may have limited experience with Australian employment processes.

> Ensure the organisation is respectful of the religious and cultural needs of your staff members (including implementing policies where appropriate).

For example, you might include in induction information and contracts that, wherever possible, staff will have access to time and space for daily prayer.

> Promote contributions from staff relating to diverse understandings and practices.

STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

> Create specific bi-cultural roles for programs, community liaison and youth engagement (where appropriate).

> Promote an understanding within the entire organisation that the work of cultural competency and engagement with young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds is not the sole work of bi-cultural workers.

> Ensure staff members other than bi-cultural workers have responsibilities for working with young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, including updating position descriptions and work plans.

Supporting Resource:

Addressing strengths and complexities of bicultural youth work (CMY 2011) available at: http://cmy.net.au/publications/addressing-strengths-and-complexities-bicultural-youth

Bringing good practice to life: Get Ready Youth Service

KNOW YOUR ORGANISATION

During one of the routine team meetings, the managers asked staff to talk about their experiences of working with young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. Staff reported that they only saw one or two young people from diverse backgrounds every month. They struggled to keep these few engaged with the organisation and found communication difficult. They also expressed frustration that they were unable to help the young people make the most of the services and opportunities staff were trying to put in place for them. Upon reflection, the team decided there were two main issues:

• Get Ready may not be accessible or welcoming to young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

• Staff lack confidence and skills in working with young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

In response, Get Ready organised for cultural competency training to be delivered to all staff by an external training organisation with expertise in this area. The staff reported the training gave them a number of new insights and skills for working well with this group.

Another strategy Get Ready implemented was to update their communications and publications. To begin, the organisation's Communications and Media Team decided to ensure that images of young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds were included in promotional materials, and the posters at the Get Ready offices were updated to make the organisation more welcoming.

KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY

Good Practice Principle: The organisation is knowledgeable of the cultural diversity in its community and client groups

Organisations that have not previously engaged with migrant and refugee communities may not realise that there are large numbers of young people from these communities that could benefit from the services they provide. The existing client group may not be reflective of the local community's actual demographics, which means an organisation's perspective of how diverse their catchment area is can be incorrect, unless they seek out accurate data and information.

Strategies:

> Routinely review population-level data for your catchment area.

> Routinely collect client demographic data (e.g. on registration or intake and assessment forms) that captures information such as ethnicity, country of birth, migrant and refugee visa status, year of arrival to Australia, language, religion, etc. as appropriate.

> Utilise the data collected to determine which groups within the community are not engaged with your organisation.

Supporting Resource:

Humanitarian Youth Arrivals to Victoria: July 2014 – June 2015 (CMY 2015) available at: http://www.cmy.net.au/publications/humanitarian-youth-arrivals-victoria-11

Good Practice Principle: Staff understand the complex contexts of young peoples' lives, the unique needs of young people and how they differ for different groups

It is essential to recognise that young people in one catchment area may have very different needs or priorities to young people residing in another area, even if they are from similar cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, the complexity of cultural identity(ies) and the broad range of migrant and refugee experiences, means that no one young person can be assumed to have the same needs as one of their peers.

Investing in processes that increase organisational understanding of the young people in the local area can help organisations:

• tailor work to the young people they want to engage with by being responsive to their specific cultural backgrounds
• address the challenges they face based on their specific pre-settlement, migration and settlement experiences, or those arising from being a second-generation migrant
• benefit from the distinctive strengths they can contribute
• ensure those who need to access the service are able to do so.

Strategies:

> Utilise demographic data collected to build an initial understanding of potential needs within target group(s) of young people.

For example, if in your area there are large numbers of newly arrived refugees who do not speak English as their first language, this may prompt you to review your interpreter referral practices and translate materials into relevant local languages.

> Utilise demographic data to refine your approaches to further strategies, such as staff training and professional development, or youth consultation (see the Connect With Your Community section for more information).

For example, you may invite a representative from a specific ethnic community to run an information session for staff, or you may use your knowledge of the community to develop a tailored and culturally appropriate youth forum for a specific ethnic group.

Bringing good practice to life: Get Ready Youth Service

KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY

Upon further review of their practices, Get Ready realised there were key questions missing from their client registration forms which meant they were unable to accurately identify which of their clients were from migrant or refugee backgrounds. They were also unaware of their local community profile so did not know whether the number of young people they were seeing was representative of their catchment area.

Get Ready began by reviewing the demographic data for their catchment area provided by the local government. They discovered that there were large numbers of young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds within their catchment area that may benefit from the supports they offer. These included an increasing number of newly arrived refugee young people from Afghanistan settling in the area and a number of young people who are second generation migrants from the Italian, Turkish and Lebanese established communities.

Get Ready added more tailored demographic questions to their registration forms so they could be better aware of who was coming to their service. The improved data collection would also enable them to track their progress towards increased engagement.

While the staff training had been a good foundation for better practice, staff realised they still did not know a lot about the specific communities identified as living in their catchment area. This set the stage for the organisation to discuss further strategies.

CONNECT WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

Good Practice Principle: The organisation has strong and respectful partnerships with community organisations and relevant networks

Community organisations that are specific to migrant and refugee communities are an excellent starting point for connecting with young people for a range of reasons. Community organisations, such as Migrant Resource Centres, can offer:

- a wealth of knowledge and information about the young people and their families in the local community, including their history, culture and needs
- ideas for appropriate and effective ways of engaging with young people and other community members
- facilitation of access to volunteers, bi-cultural staff, and translation and interpreter services
- existing communication avenues and networks that can be used to advertise or reach out to young people e.g. language radio programs; community notice boards; meetings and activities; newsletters; etc.
- access to community leaders.

Forming relationships with the community and community leaders via these organisations can also increase an organisation's trustworthiness in the eyes of young people and their parents/families (who may otherwise feel intimidated by a mainstream service or one with which they are unfamiliar). If an organisation has a good standing within the community, then young people (and their parents) are likely to feel more comfortable engaging with their services and programs.

It is also worthwhile partnering or participating in networks with other generalist organisations who work in similar sectors or local areas. This can strengthen an organisation's capacity to provide effective services through sharing of information and providing opportunities for collaboration.

Strategies:

COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

> Determine the relevant community organisations that work with or represent local migrant and refugee communities.

> Establish informal and/or formal arrangements for working collaboratively with local community organisations.

> Ensure that partnerships with community organisations are reciprocal in nature (i.e. that resources, knowledge and assistance are shared both ways).

> Utilise partnerships with a range of community organisations to communicate and engage effectively and in a culturally appropriate way with diverse groups of young people in your community.

> Utilise partnerships with the community to facilitate decisions about service changes or new programs.

NETWORKS

> Determine the existing ethnic-specific, migrant and refugee, and youth networks that are relevant to your sector or local area.

> Become a member of, and contribute expertise to, the relevant networks.

> Advocate for youth-specific issues to be addressed in migrant and refugee networks; advocate for migrant and refugee-specific issues to be addressed in youth networks.

> Contribute to the development of action plans that work towards greater collaboration and stream-lining of service provision to young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

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i **What community organisations are specific to migrants and refugees?**

Relevant community organisations include ethno-specific organisations, Migrant Resource Centres, multicultural services, ethnic media (TV, radio and print), and religious organisations (churches, mosques, etc.).

These community organisations range from small, entirely volunteer based ethno- or community-specific groups, to well-established, government funded services targeting a broad range of migrant and refugee communities. Only a few of these organisations are likely to be youth-specific, although some may have youth focussed activities or services.

There are also a number of statewide peak bodies for migrant and refugee communities including:

- Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY)
- Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (EECV)
- Victorian Multicultural Commission.

While many migrant and refugee people are well-connected to a community organisation, be aware that emerging communities may not have any organisations available specifically for their communities and as such lack many of the support structures of more established communities. Working with Humanitarian Settlement Services, Adult Migrant Education Service providers or English language schools may be a useful starting point if you wish to engage with newly arrived young people or those from emerging communities.

Good Practice Principle: The organisation proactively engages, seeks feedback from, and encourages leadership by young people in programs and services

Young people must be offered opportunities to genuinely contribute to the design and delivery of services that affect their lives in a way that privileges their input. This reflects the 'nothing about us, without us' principle of good youth practice.

Furthermore, creating opportunities for genuine feedback and consulting directly with young people and communities will help organisations to:

- form an in-depth understanding of the cultures, aspirations and strengths of local young people
- ensure that services and programs are directly relevant to the young people accessing the organisation
- ensure that strategies genuinely respond to the specific challenges young people are experiencing
- reduce barriers to access that young people have identified as particularly relevant to your organisation.

Supporting Resources:

Considering Consulting? A practical guide (CMY 2009) available at: http://cmy.net.au/publications/considering-consulting-0

CMY also contributed to the development of Taking Young People Seriously. Consulting young people about their ideas and opinions: a handbook for organisations working with young people (YACVic 2004), which can be downloaded here http://www.yacvic.org.au/policy-publications/yacvicother-publications-and-resources/48-youth-participation/437-taking-young-people-seriously-handbooks

Strategies:

> Value the unique input and strengths of a diverse range of young people.

> Ensure that client feedback forms and processes are accessible and culturally appropriate for young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, including use of relevant languages and/or plain English.

> Implement a process for regular and meaningful consultation with young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, such as holding forums.

> Create opportunities for young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds to actively contribute to decision making, design and delivery of services and programs, and organisational development.

> Promote leadership development of young people within your organisation.

i Youth Advisory Group: a youth leadership model

One way to formalise the leadership and proactive contribution of young people within your organisation is to create a Youth Advisory Group (YAG).

A YAG is a committee or group of your organisation that is part of the organisation's structure or hierarchy. Decision making is usually maintained by the organisation's board, executive and managers, but input from the YAG is genuinely considered.

There are a number of models for a YAG but in general it is composed of a small-medium number of young people who can provide information on the lived experiences of young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds in your catchment area and offer advice on strategic directions, service provision, program design and delivery, and emerging issues in the community. Depending on what is appropriate for your organisation, the make up of a YAG may include young people from non-migrant or refugee backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people as well.

Developing a Terms of Reference will outline the membership, purpose and functioning of the YAG alongside the relationship of the YAG to the organisation.

Bringing good practice to life: Get Ready Youth Service

CONNECT WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

The vast majority of Get Ready's clients come directly to the service, in response to an active social media profile and advertising campaign. However, the few clients from a refugee background have all been referred to them by another service. The staff realised that their usual methods of attracting clients did not appear to be working for this cohort.

The Communications and Media Team explored how their advertising could better reach young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. They contacted the local Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) and asked for assistance translating materials into relevant local languages. They also discussed with the MRC what types of existing communication channels were available that they could use to advertise to these communities. Alongside the MRC e-newsletter and social media, it was suggested that Get Ready contact a local Italian media organisation, the local Adult Migrant English Service provider, and the local Humanitarian Settlement Services provider, among others. After a few months of advertising through these channels, Get Ready found that more young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds were self-referring to their services.

During their conversations with these local organisations, Get Ready discovered that there was a local Humanitarian Support Network made up of a number of different service providers who collaborate on responding to issues facing refugee communities. They sent a representative along to the next meeting.

At the network meeting, Get Ready staff met another organisation who worked with young people who were transitioning from high school to tertiary education, who also felt that they weren't easily able to reach young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. They raised the idea with Get Ready of running a youth event together, with the aim of helping local young people explore their education, training and employment options and to seek feedback on how their services could better help them. The two organisations developed a free, half-day migrant and refugee youth forum that would have some fun activities and culturally appropriate food, as well as service presentations and youth consultation sessions.

Young people who attended the forum reported that the opportunity to provide input into the service made them feel Get Ready genuinely cared about them. The forum increased their confidence to access services and explore opportunities for education and employment that they had previously not considered.

WORK WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

Good Practice Principle: The organisation's existing generalist programs and services are accessible to young people and responsive to their needs

Operational aspects of program and service design and delivery can act as barriers to access for many young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. These barriers arise from inadequate systemic and organisational responses to the cultural, linguistic and settlement or migration context of young people's lives. Working with local young people and their communities to understand and then intentionally address these barriers will enable increased participation and engagement of young people in generalist services. These factors will also be of relevance when designing activities such as consultation forums, or when creating targeted programs (see the next good practice principle).

Supporting resources

Culturally Competent Intake and Assessment (CMY 2011) available from: http://www.cmy.net. au/publications/culturally-competent-intake-and-assessment

Working with Interpreters (CMY 2011) available at: http://cmy.net.au/publications/working-interpreters

Strategies:

> Audit all of your organisation's services and programs to ensure that factors that may act as barriers to access are addressed.

For example, a few strategies you could consider are to ensure that:

- it is easy for young people to find out about your organisation, what services and programs are offered, why it would be of benefit to them and how to get in contact

- information provided to young people increases their understanding of the broader service system context that your organisation sits within

- forms and processes (e.g. for intake and assessment/registration) are easy to understand and navigate; include questions that sensitively seek answers to challenges unique to young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds; assess particular vulnerabilities (e.g. those who are homeless/ at risk of homelessness; those with trauma and mental health issues; unaccompanied minors/young people isolated from family networks); and are completed by staff confident and skilled in working with the complex realities of this group of young people

- programs and services are affordable (free or low-cost)

- programs and services are easily accessible via public transport, or provide car pooling or group bus pick ups etc.

- consideration of religious requirements such as catering and prayer times is built into the design and delivery of programs and services

- the organisation has processes for informing and engaging parents and extended family members

- interpreters are easily available and information about your organisation is translated into languages spoken locally.

Good Practice Principle: The organisation delivers targeted programs for young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, where appropriate

While all generalist services should be accessible to young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, there can be a role for targeted ethnic-specific or multicultural service components or programs within generalist services.

- There are some specific needs that young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds have that generalist streams of service provision may not always be able to meet.
- Targeted activities can provide an easier entry point to unfamiliar services and systems, and act as a stepping stone for young people to engage more broadly in generalist services and subsequently the wider community.
- Targeted programs can support young people to explore and develop their cultural identity(ies) and resilience during transitional phases of youth and assist in acculturation to Australian ways of life.

The potential range of targeted services or programs for young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds is as broad as the diversity of young people themselves and the organisations/sectors that work with them. The targeted program or service an organisation provides can only be determined in the context of the organisation and with the input of young people and their communities.

It may not always be feasible for organisations to develop new activities, so utilising networks and referrals is essential. This will also ensure there is no duplication of programs in the local area and that genuine gaps can be identified.

It is important to remember that targeted activities are only one aspect of developing a culturally inclusive organisation.

Strategies:

> Create a specified stream of service provision or a stand alone program for a target ethnic group or multicultural young people where appropriate.

For example you may:

- employ case workers specifically to provide more intensive support for a specific ethnic group of young people
- deliver an additional activity for all local migrant and refugee young people in your area, with the aim of increasing their familiarity and engagement with your service.

> Be aware of and refer appropriately to targeted programs.

> Work with networks to identify gaps in targeted programs available in your local area.
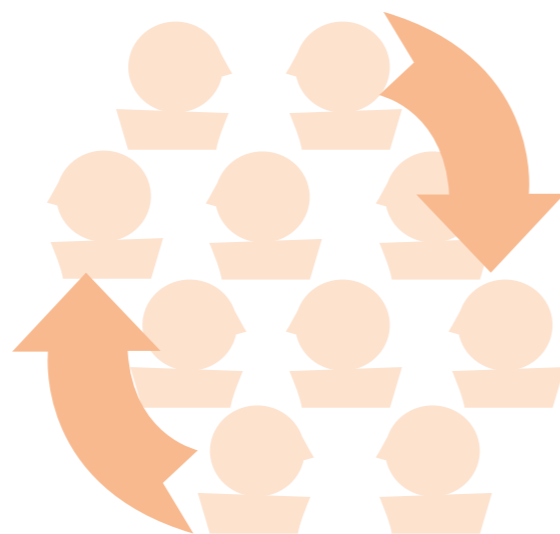
Bringing good practice to life: Get Ready Youth Service

WORK WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

Following the staff training and youth forum, client-facing staff reflected on the issues raised by young people about the challenges they face, and reflected on the ways in which they assessed and responded to young people's training and employment support needs.

Staff began to explore these in more detail with clients, based on their new understanding of settlement challenges and cultural differences. Staff also began engaging interpreters more often for clients who spoke English as a second language.

After a number of team meetings where staff reported back the outcomes of these interactions, it was decided that the Assessment and Planning Form would be updated to improve and standardise the process for this group of young people.

As a result of these strategies, the client-facing staff noticed that they felt much less frustrated in their interactions with young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. They were also much more confident in developing a useful and tailored plan with their clients, which the young people continued to stay engaged with.

Get Ready also identified that the newly arrived Afghani young people were finding it hard to engage with employment options due to a lack of confidence and connections with the broader community. Through its networks, the organisation became aware of a local sports club which had targeted programs for young Afghani people, so decided to provide information about these programs to their Afghani clients as a way of responding to this specific need.

Glossary

Note: The terms described below such as 'refugee', 'migrant' and 'newly arrived' are useful for capturing the particular experiences of some young people and responding appropriately to their needs. CMY is aware that these are often considered 'labels' by young people, who may not choose to use them in describing themselves and their experiences

Asylum seeker: An asylum seeker is someone who is making a claim for protection as a refugee. They may be seeking safety and protection from persecution and harm, but their request for refugee status has not been heard or processed. It is not illegal under international law to seek asylum and refugee protection. In this guide, asylum seekers living in Australia are covered by the term 'refugee background'.

Emerging community: An emerging community is one in which there are small numbers of people living in Australia and who have been here, as a cultural group, for a short period of time. For example HREOC uses this term to describe groups of less than 20,000 people who have been here less than 10 years[4]. This means these communities generally lack earlier generations of settlers. They are mostly all the first generation to live in Australia and have few Australian-born second-generation community members. Emerging communities often lack established support networks and ethnic-specific organisations or programs. They also face additional challenges as mainstream Australian services have limited understanding about, or exposure to, their cultural background.

Established community: An established community is one in which many generations of cultural or ethnic groups are living in Australia (for example, Greek, Italian, Vietnamese communities). These communities may have come to Australia as either migrants or refugees. An individual can be newly arrived even if the broader ethnic community they identify with is an established one within Australia. Established communities usually have well-developed community-based support services and programs and the broader Australian community may be generally more aware of the culture and history of the community.

Ethnicity: Ethnicity is a multi-dimensional concept that can be defined in various ways but usually refers to a group of people who have common ancestry, language (and dialects), family and social customs, religious or spiritual beliefs and a long communal history. Ethnicity is often considered an equivalent of culture, however CMY considers culture to be a much broader and more dynamic concept.

Migrant: A person who leaves their country of origin voluntarily to seek a better life for a range of personal and economic reasons. They have made the choice to leave, had the chance to plan and prepare for migration and generally can return at any time if they wish. There a number of classes of migration visas available in Australia including skilled migrant, family and international student visa categories.

Migrant background: CMY uses the term 'migrant background' to acknowledge that some young people may have been born in Australia but have close cultural and ethnic ties to family members or communities who migrated from overseas. See also: Second Generation Migrant

Multicultural: This term refers to many cultures and is often used to describe a society that is culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse.

Newly arrived: This refers to someone who was born overseas and has lived in Australia for a relatively short time. The Australian Government defines 'newly arrived' as someone who has arrived in Australia in the previous five years. Other definitions vary according to the length of time it is considered to take to effectively resettle (up to 10 years).

Refugee: The 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, to which Australia is a signatory, defines refugees as people who are outside their country of nationality or their usual country of residence and are unable or unwilling to return or to seek the protection of that country due to a well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. Many refugee young people come to Australia with their immediate or extended family while others come as unaccompanied minors.

Refugee background: CMY uses the term 'refugee background' to acknowledge both refugees in Australia on humanitarian visas and those who have fled their home country in similar circumstances or who have a refugee experience, but are not in Australia on a humanitarian visa.

Second-generation migrant: A person who is born in Australia but who has at least one parent who was born overseas. Second-generation migrants often have a good understanding of 'mainstream' Australian culture and systems, having been born and grown up here, but often find it challenging to navigate the interactions between these cultural norms and the cultural norms of their parents' generation.

Young people/youth: The United Nations defines 'youth' as people aged between 15 and 24 years inclusive. In Australia, government and non-government services commonly expand the definition to include 12 to 25 year olds. The concept of youth is understood differently across cultures as it relates to life stages, roles within the family and other social expectations.

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4 Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) New Country, New Stories: discrimination and disadvantage experienced by people in small and emerging communities. Sydney, HREOC, 1999

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