



## Schools and Community Organisations: Partnering on Learning Support

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Assisting the sector to build partnerships between schools and community organisations is an integral part of the LBB program and has an important bearing upon the successful running of homework programs and ultimately, on student outcomes. It is also an area that can be the most challenging to manage and requires dedicated staff time to forge relationships and build systems to attract students, recruit and retain volunteers, resource programs and build communication around individual student performance and needs.

Of the 270 homework clubs in Victoria, 38% are managed by schools, 37% by community organisations and 15% by school-community organisation partnerships. Schools and community organisations each have comparative advantages in running homework programs, though programs are strengthened through a partnership model that pools services, resources and expertise of both parties. The table on the next page summarises the benefits of different homework program management arrangements.

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The Centre for Multicultural Youth is a Victorian not-for-profit organisation supporting young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds to build better lives in Australia.

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	School	Community Organisation	Partnership: school and community organisation
Reaching Students	Able to directly target students with the most need	Able to attract 'difficult to reach' and disengaged students.	Greater resources (human and physical) availability than if operating alone.
Resources and links to services	Well-resourced classrooms, learning materials and teaching staff	Well linked to other relevant community services.	Opportunity to 'capture' the benefits of both (or more) settings and organisations.
Student learning and wellbeing outcomes	Established learning environment	Use of own resource/ staff base including volunteer recruitment and retention.	Convergence of learning and community wellbeing outcomes
School, family and community engagement	Greater opportunity for liaison with school on student progress	Parental engagement skills and links with communities	Greater scope to address gaps in learning support for students in a more sustainable way

Adapted from Learning Beyond the Bell Program Evaluation, 'Six Month Report and Recommendations', January 2011

## Keysborough College - Embrace Education Partnership

In a recent survey conducted by CMY with 45 homework program coordinators, over a third of respondents said that volunteer recruitment, attendance and retention was the biggest challenge facing their programs. Partnering with community organisations allows schools running homework programs to address this challenge to a larger degree than if operating independently. The partnership between Keysborough College and Embrace Education is an excellent example of this.

In 2009, Keysborough College was established through the merging of four local schools in the City of Greater Dandenong. This region receives the highest percentage of newly arrived young people in Victoria. The Chandler campus sought assistance from LBB to apply for a 'Best Practice' Grant - a three-year grant, funded by DEECD, to improve the quality of homework programs. Through these discussions the LBB Regional Officer successfully supported Keysborough College to partner with Embrace Education, which is a not-for profit organisation that recruits students from Monash University to provide free tutoring to high school students from refugee and migrant backgrounds. The two parties worked together, formed a Memorandum of Understanding and were ultimately successful in obtaining the Best Practice grant.

This has been a win-win situation for both the College and Embrace Education. Now running homework programs at each of their four campuses, the College has only to provide a venue and a staff presence, benefiting from the provision of reliable and high quality volunteer tutors from Monash University. Similarly, Embrace Education was able to expand its organisation

and employ someone to coordinate the program and the volunteers. The strength of this partnership was again recognised in 2010 when the two parties were successful in their joint application for the NAB Schools First grant. The positive impact on students attending these homework programs is obvious:

'I love homework club because all the teachers are here to help you. It's just like having your own tutor except it's free...it's not like class because class has 24 students and they can't help everyone...but here they help you one- on -one.' Michelle, Year 12 student, Keysborough College

For further information, see the My Education page for case studies of successful school and community learning support partnerships:  
[http://www.cmy.net.au/advanced-search?search\\_api\\_views\\_fulltext=+&field\\_tags=All&field\\_resource\\_type=130&field\\_media\\_type=All&field\\_publication\\_era=All](http://www.cmy.net.au/advanced-search?search_api_views_fulltext=+&field_tags=All&field_resource_type=130&field_media_type=All&field_publication_era=All)