Multicultural Youth

Seen and Heard
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AUSTRALIAN mosaic

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FECCA received funding from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship and support for Australian mosaic from Centrelink.
I am proud to bring you this latest edition of Australian mosaic, in which we canvas a range of views from young people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, and from the people who work closely alongside them.

The energy, enthusiasm and thoughtfulness of all our authors is to be highly commended.

This edition was inspired by young people themselves, young people who have thankfully been willing to share their views with FECCA on an ongoing basis.

In October last year we ran a successful youth forum, titled ‘Who do you think you are?’ which explored ideas of identity and belonging through discussion groups, speakers and interactive activities.

What the forum highlighted for us was that young people from diverse backgrounds can find themselves faced with tough questions about their identities, and can have a variety of responses to balancing their cultural background with the life they are building in Australia.

Young people from CALD backgrounds can also face unique barriers when it comes to education, housing and family relationships. They worry about racism, and question whether or not the government and educational institutions are doing enough to support our multicultural society.

In 2006, ABS statistics revealed that there were 310,832 young people aged between 15 and 24 living in Australia who were born overseas in a non-main English speaking country. We also know that the number of young people arriving in Australia under the Refugee and Humanitarian Program is incredibly high, with 59% of the new entrants between July 2005 and June 2010 being aged under 25 on arrival. It is therefore imperative that we continue to consider and address issues that affect our young people.

For their hard work on our youth forum and their input into this edition of Australian mosaic, I sincerely thank our national youth committee, chaired by Tina Hosseini and comprised of young people from around the country, for their ongoing commitment to FECCA, and their unwavering support for young people from diverse backgrounds.

You will find that a number of articles in this edition challenge ideas of identity and youth engagement. Justin Kwok, a member of our youth committee, writes eloquently on the topic of biculturalism. Tshibanda Gracia Ngoy, a young caseworker, unpacks the barriers that may confront young refugees from CALD backgrounds, while community project officer from the Victorian Immigrant and Refugee Women’s Coalition, Arfa Noor, offers us a thought-provoking look at the lives of female international students.

Other topics discussed in this edition include youth homelessness, the power of social media, youth and community radio and sports initiatives that encourage participation and social inclusion.
We are also very pleased to be able to include two profiles in this edition of young Australians from CALD backgrounds who inspire us, and who have been strong supporters of our Reclaim Multiculturalism campaign. Australian cricketer Usman Khawaja and Queanbeyan poet and rap artist Omar bin Musa both emotively discuss their experiences growing up in Australia, their work, and their hopes for the future.

I also take this time to draw your attention to our upcoming national conference in Adelaide in November 2011. FECCA Conference 2011 – Advancing Multiculturalism is shaping up to be a tremendous event. I am excited to announce that, at this time, we have a number of confirmed conference speakers including The Hon Grace Portolesi MP, South Australian Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Isobel Redmond MP, South Australian Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Senator the Hon Kate Lundy, Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Scott Morrison MP, Shadow Minister for Immigration and Citizenship and Productivity and Population and Hieu Van Le AO, Lieutenant Governor of South Australia and Chairman of the South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission (SAMEAC), amongst many others. I encourage you all to visit the conference website linked from www.fecca.org.au for information on registration, our call for papers and sponsorship. Youth issues will form a pertinent part of the conference, with discussion around issues which arise in this edition well on the agenda.

I leave you with a thought from a participant at our youth forum last year:

“If I can identify myself as an Australian then I can fully contribute, but if I have to fight for my identity ... why should I contribute if I don’t belong?”

We must support our young people by acknowledging the challenges they face, and working with them to break down barriers.
In recent times, at FECCA, we have reflected on the role of youth in our advocacy work. The FECCA Executive Committee has a Youth representative and we have a national Youth Committee. We have also encountered the voices of many young people in our national Access and Equity Consultations including the Youth Forum held in Melbourne last year. FECCA has been enriched by the work of some young staff in our office and this has also led to lively discussions about how we can garner the passion and idealism of young people in our advocacy work.

This issue of Australian mosaic is dedicated to the voices of young people and to their views on the meaning and place of multiculturalism in their lives. In a milieu where there is cynicism and where politics can often seem jaded debates which lack soul and passion, it is valuable to look at things with the optimism and energy of young people. Many of the new developing nations are also those that have very high populations of young people (India is one example). In India I saw how a campaigner for an anti corruption law was joined by thousands of young professionals from across the country in his ‘satyagraha’ or Gandhian hunger protest. These young people had taken leave from their jobs to join the campaign. We need young people to remind us that nothing is entrenched and that everything can be changed.

Young people grow up in an increasingly globalised society where the boundaries of culture and identity expand and change all the time. The negotiation between cultures and identities is an everyday reality for many of them. Social media is a medium without boundaries, at once local and international and personal and universal. The straddling of such paradoxes is a necessity that many young people turn into their strength. It makes us question our carefully protected comfort zones, which include stereotypes of all kinds such as culture, Australianness and so forth. It even questions fundamental things such as the ways in which we communicate and socialise with each other.

FECCA’s consultations have revealed that youth from culturally diverse and new and emerging communities have specific needs that are often unmet. More than most other people, they are at the coalface of inter and cross cultural negotiation as they enter schools, training and employment while dealing with settlement tensions. Different roles of family and community can pull them in opposing directions as they encounter Australian systems based on individually centred models. Intergenerational conflict leads to serious outcomes for young people, including isolation, homelessness and substance abuse. It also leaves behind the ruins of families and communities who are bewildered by the events and have no understanding or capacity to retrieve the situation. I have personally heard a tearful woman say to me, “I wish I had never left the camps. Now I have lost my son. He left home and the government pays him to do nothing.”

There is no argument that our systems are well meaning. However, when culture is not considered as a factor in policy, design and delivery of services, then the best intentioned efforts can create tragic outcomes.
As a mother with young children, I myself negotiate this cultural interface on a daily basis. Many years ago, when I worked as an artist, I used to be called upon regularly to present about Indian culture to schools and colleges. Now I find that my children are hardly exposed in any in-depth way to other cultures and practices. There is no engagement with difference other than the fact that many children at the same school also come from diverse cultural backgrounds. I have seen this kind of indifference passing off as ‘tolerance’ in the Netherlands where I also lived for some time. Of course there has been a lot discussed about the idea of ‘tolerance’ itself and whether this alone is enough to create truly inclusive societies. Polite and even peaceful indifference is not enough to create equality of participation and contribution.

It is clear that the past years have eroded our commitment to multiculturalism. Nowhere is this more evident than in the many spheres our young people inhabit such as educational institutions, training and employment.

One of the young participants in our Access and Equity consultation in Darwin called schools crucial “sites of information.” Currently we are failing in providing the information that will create equality for all Australians in such “sites of information.”

Experiences of discrimination and racism are common narratives from young people. They will also say that such experiences have profound effects on their lives including in terms of mental health issues and unemployment. It creates a disengaged youth populace which then feeds into stereotypes of cultural gangs and criminality.

Next year FECCA will work with the Freilich Foundation, Australian National University, to create workshops for teachers about positive political engagement for young people. This project is supported by a grant from the Building Community Resilience funding from the Attorney General’s Department. FECCA is supported by Muslims Australia and the Australian Multicultural Foundation in an advisory capacity. This is part of FECCA’s vision to address some of the issues for young people including creating an enhanced sense of belonging and participation in Australian democratic processes.

Young people are doers. They often ‘walk the talk’ and model for us that it is not words that create change but action. I often think that the truncated language of tweeting and sms texts is a backlash against the voluminous emptiness of public discourse in the political and other social arenas.

FECCA would like many more young people to join our movement, Advancing Multiculturalism. We invite young people to share with us their dreams and vision for Australia and to participate in our work towards building an Australia where we can see ourselves reflected in Australia’s identity and sense of self.
Usman Khawaja is a young Australian cricketing star who has recently won a Cricket Australia contract, making him not only the 419th Test player for Australia but the first Muslim Australian cricket player. A supporter of FECCA’s Reclaim Multiculturalism campaign, Usman is an inspiration to CALD Australian youth. FECCA looks forward to cheering him on throughout what will surely be a brilliant career.

1. Why cricket? Why not AFL or soccer, for example?
   Usman: I followed in the footsteps of my brothers and my dad. They all loved cricket, and so I followed suit. I think that’s how it goes for many people!

2. What was it like growing up in Australia? Did you feel you were different?
   Usman: I loved growing up in Australia. I never felt like an outsider at all, and I had lots of friends growing up. Even after my first day in Kindergarten, when I only knew two words of English, I remember feeling very welcomed.

3. What is the most memorable thing you remember about your childhood?
   Usman: My most memorable childhood moment was probably when I went to Centennial Park in Sydney and watched the players go crazy against each other on the cricket field. I remember the wicket in the middle of park, and how I would fetch the ball all the time, hoping that I’d get a go at the end.

4. What was your family like? Were they very traditional? Did they like you focusing on sport?
   Usman: They are traditional in some aspects and not in others. I think they have found a nice balance. Growing up, my mum always pushed me academically and my dad always helped me to follow my passion for sports.

5. How do you feel about being described as the first Muslim Australian cricket player?
   Usman: To me personally, it’s not as big a deal as being the first and only player to be the 419th Test player for Australia. No one can take that away from me and I’ll hold on to that forever.

6. Do you think religion is important to young people?
   Usman: I don’t think religion is particularly important for everyone. It is for me, because it keeps me grounded and makes me realise that there is more to life. Without religion, I don’t feel complete. But it’s different for everyone, and I think that every individual should strive to find something that brings them back to a level state of mind; otherwise things can spin out of control pretty quickly.

7. Who is your hero? Why?
   Usman: Michael Jordan is one of the heroes that I’ve had since my childhood. I still look at him and think “I wish I played basketball” ... that’s the effect he’s had on me. He always wanted to be in the game, playing the game, and would be the first person to put his hand up when the pressure was on. Whether he failed or succeeded didn’t matter, he just wanted to have the ball in his hand, and I loved him for that.

8. What is your dream?
   Usman: My dream has always been to play Test cricket for Australia, and hopefully I can keep this dream going for as long as possible.

9. What is your message to young Australians from multicultural backgrounds?
   Usman: Be respectful, be yourself and lead by example.
Strengthening Belonging and Identity: The People of Australia, Multiculturalism and CALD Young People

Nadine Liddy, National Co-ordinator, Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (Australia)

The Federal Government’s announcement in February of a new Multicultural policy, The People of Australia, has been welcomed by many, including the Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN), as a significant step in building social cohesion and celebrating the culturally, religious and ethnically diverse nation in which we live. This new policy framework, including its underpinning principles and initiatives, has a fundamental role to play in a more meaningful social inclusion agenda.

Multiculturalism is about “Australia’s shared experience and the composition of its neighbourhoods (and) acknowledges the benefits and potential that cultural diversity brings” (Australian Government, 2011:2). It celebrates Australia’s ethnic and cultural diversity as strengths and recognises the impact of culture and ethnicity on disadvantage and social inclusion. It recognises and confirms that, for all Australians, culture is fundamental to a person’s wellbeing and sense of belonging, and to our overall national identity.

But what does this new multicultural policy mean for young people from CALD backgrounds in Australia? And how might it impact on wellbeing, belonging and identity for this group of Australians, who are already living multicultural, multilingual lives?

For young people from CALD backgrounds, identity formation is influenced by a sense of belonging in terms of nationality and, significantly, government policy agendas around nation-building policies like multiculturalism, cultural identity and family, and by the response from the broader society to themselves and their community. This means that multicultural young people often develop and negotiate complex notions of identity that are flexible and dynamic, by juggling the intersection between, and influences of, family, cultural and faith communities, peers, technology, and the broader society.

For some young people this ‘juggle’ becomes a valuable skill, and is integral to a strong sense of belonging and economic and social participation in Australian society. For others, particularly newly arrived young people, it can be experienced as an enormous pressure in addition to particular barriers they may face in accessing services and opportunities. These barriers include language, culture, unfamiliarity with Australian systems and processes, racism, and discrimination. These factors can place newly-arrived young people at social and economic disadvantage within Australian society.

The MYAN believes that a targeted response at both policy and service delivery levels is necessary in order to address some of these barriers and support CALD young people’s sustained participation in Australian society.

The People of Australia, as a policy framework with a number of targeted initiatives to help foster multiculturalism, will ideally go some way to addressing barriers young people face to social and economic inclusion. These include: the Multicultural Youth Sports Partnership Program, the National Anti-Racism Partnership and Strategy, the Multicultural Arts and Festivals Grants, and a commitment to strengthening the Access and Equity framework.
Experiences of racism can be explicit, including racial vilification and abuse, and implicit, including community attitudes and the representations of migrant and refugee young people in the media. The media commonly fails to recognise diversity or the achievements and strengths of multicultural young people and their communities.

For young people from multicultural backgrounds, the experience of racism and discrimination threatens personal wellbeing. Participation in organised sport can facilitate links to social networks and support and can, particularly for newly arrived young people, also assist the settlement process by providing additional support as young people negotiate their past, present and future in Australia.

Cortis, Sawrikar and Muir (2007:1) note the benefits can be personal, socio-cultural and economic, stating that: "...participation can offer a social and political space in which to cultivate cultural diversity and promote social inclusion. These benefits mean that enabling equal participation and dismantling any barriers that exist for different groups is important not only for individual wellbeing, but also for social cohesion and national economic performance."

The Multicultural Youth Sports Partnership program is a welcome recognition at the federal policy and program levels of the role sport and recreation can play in fostering social inclusion.

Despite our cultural diversity, racism and discrimination is an ever-present reality for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. A national study conducted by the Foundation for Young Australians in 2009 found that over 80% of research participants from non-Anglo-Australian backgrounds reported being subjected to some form of racism.

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For young people from multicultural backgrounds, the experience of racism and discrimination threatens personal
and cultural identity, and can have a detrimental impact on mental health, psychological development and capacity to negotiate the transition to adulthood.

As such, the experience of racism and discrimination can also be a key barrier to social inclusion, as it can diminish a young person’s sense of connection and belonging to their community and broader society, reinforce the experience of marginalisation and isolation, and inhibit participation in education, employment or recreational activities.

The MYAN looks forward to the progress of the National Anti-Racism Partnership and Strategy, in particular its focus on education resources, public awareness and youth engagement.

**MULTICULTURAL ARTS AND FESTIVALS GRANTS**

The Multicultural Arts and Festivals Grants, with its focus on community-based cultural expression, will ideally provide innovative opportunities for young people from diverse backgrounds to come together, and express and celebrate their complex (and multiple) cultural identities and heritage. This in turn will significantly contribute to building a strong, vibrant and creative national culture in Australia. Dialogue and expression that allows for the production of both shared and contested identities and ideas is integral to a healthy democracy and is the foundation of a respectful and tolerant civic society.

**ACCESS AND EQUITY**

A renewed commitment to, and specific measures to strengthen, access and equity in government services is also a pleasing response to some of the structural barriers to services and support that many CALD young people face. The MYAN is particularly pleased to see a proposed inquiry to measure the responsiveness of Australian Government services to CALD clients, the development of an access and equity strategy (overseen by the new Australian Multicultural Council), and a review of data collection to ensure accurate data on cultural background is captured at both federal and state/territory levels.

The MYAN has for some time advocated for nationally consistent data collection (especially in the mental health, housing and homelessness and juvenile justice sectors) in order to better capture the experiences of CALD young people in accessing support services.

We also hope that this renewed commitment to access and equity at the national level will provide increased recognition of the role of cultural competency in addressing barriers for CALD young people to accessing services and appropriate support.

While the MYAN welcomes the government’s new multicultural policy and its renewed commitment to multiculturalism, we also believe that, fundamental to any policy and program response, is recognising that young people have unique experiences and knowledge, and are best placed to articulate the issues impacting on their lives and identify appropriate solutions.

We hope that The People of Australia will provide opportunities to harness young people’s skills, experience and knowledge in building the future of a socially inclusive, multicultural Australia.

For a full list of references, please contact: Nadine Liddy on email nliddy@cmy.net.au.
Rise of the Hybrids: ‘Biculturalism’ and CALD Youth in Australia
Justin Chi Wai Kwok

My best friend once told me that the second most traumatic experience in the average person’s life, after the death of loved ones, is moving home.

I believe that for many migrants to Australia, my best friend’s words will hold true. Their experience, however, would have involved more than moving furniture from one suburb to the next. Rather, it would have involved transplanting themselves, and their families in many cases, from their social and cultural home into a strange and alien world where the people look differently, speak differently and behave differently.

To discover success in such a life-changing move requires much more than courage and hope – it requires adaptation or evolution.

Adaptation can be achieved through the tolerance and practice of cultural and social norms which are different from your own. This allows a migrant to function in a new society without changing their own native cultural and social ideas.

Evolution, on the other hand, occurs when a person conceives and develops the cultural and social ideas native to the host country by way of an internally driven process. The oddity of evolution is that the migrant ends up with more than one set of cultural and social ideas, some of which may even conflict with each other.

This process of evolution therefore produces persons who are bicultural, in some cases multicultural, and who can be aptly described as cultural hybrids.

I have observed, in the Chinese community at least, that evolution is most prevalent in youth because, invariably, youth are more mentally receptive to learning and development than adults who are more rigid in their thinking. I certainly fell into the category of receptive youth.

To begin, I will discuss my cultural background before I experienced cultural evolution and, ultimately, biculturalism.

I grew up in a Chinese household and was taught Chinese cultural values which I, in retrospect, can identify as rooted in traditional Confucianist ideals of filial piety which demanded children to be good to one’s parents, obey and respect one’s parents, and to not be rebellious.

The effect of these values on me as a child was that I never talked back to my parents and I would never involve myself in their conversations if I was not asked to participate – behaviours I interpreted to be signs of respect.

Equipped only with Chinese cultural values, I applied them to the spheres of my life outside of my home. The most memorable testing ground for my Chinese cultural values was, of course, primary school.

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This process of evolution therefore produces persons who are bicultural, in some cases multicultural, and who can be aptly described as cultural hybrids.

This article discusses the effects of evolution on CALD youth through my own experience as a cultural hybrid of Chinese and Australian cultures.

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The effect of these values on me as a child was that I never talked back to my parents and I would never involve myself in their conversations if I was not asked to participate – behaviours I interpreted to be signs of respect.

Equipped only with Chinese cultural values, I applied them to the spheres of my life outside of my home. The most memorable testing ground for my Chinese cultural values was, of course, primary school.
The respect accorded to teachers in the Chinese culture is close to, if not on par with, that accorded to parents. To respect my teachers I seldom asked questions or contributed ideas in class unless I was asked to by the teacher. In my mind this seemed culturally correct but through my teachers’ eyes I was introverted and quiet – a perception which translated into less favourable reports.

Ultimately, I learnt through primary school that there was a distinct difference between how I behaved and how the ‘Australians’ behaved, and I slowly became attuned to this difference. This new awareness caused me to think about everything I did before I did it, almost as if to consider the proper cultural behaviour to apply in various situations. This awareness of two differing sets of cultural values was the catalyst of my evolution towards biculturalism.

At this point, I must discuss the effect of becoming aware of differing cultural values on CALD youth because I have seen this awareness go very differently for other Chinese youth in my community.

Generally speaking, bicultural awareness delivers three distinct choices to CALD youth (although these are subconscious rather than conscious choices). Firstly, the CALD youth can choose to adopt one set of values and discard the other. Secondly, they can discard both and in so doing become socially disconnected and withdrawn. Thirdly, they can adopt both and evolve into a cultural hybrid.

If culture is like the DNA of identity, serving as a repository of social behaviours, values and prejudices passed down from generation to generation, then biculturalism is like the DNA of two parents combining where some characteristics of one set of DNA will be dominant to the other set and vice versa.
Accordingly, CALD youth in Australia who become bicultural face the challenge of forging their own identity out of two separate and sometimes opposing sets of social behaviours, values and prejudices.

Again using myself as a case study, I recall that in the later years of high school and at university, my ‘Australian’ friends engaged in a very active social life of parties and drinking. I had difficulty grappling with what seemed like a prevalent cultural norm in mainstream Australian culture because my parents advocated a lifestyle of self-discipline and non-alcoholism and I, with my Confucian influences, found it difficult to cause friction with my parents.

My dilemma lasted for many years until I finally found a balance between respecting my parents and partaking in a more active social life. This required that I rationalise my more active social life as a way to network and build connections and that not only helped me put my parents at ease, but also helped me find harmony in a cultural conflict between the Chinese and the Australian in me.

The internal conflicts faced by CALD youth will often be quite burdensome because biculturalism is not an issue that is properly discussed or acknowledged in Australia or in CALD communities. In fact, biculturalism can often be met with latent hostility, even within the original cultural community. For example, there are derogatory labels for bicultural Chinese like ‘bananas’ and ‘ABCs’. The term ‘banana’ is used to denote a person who is of ‘yellow’ skin but who is ‘white’ underneath. The term ‘ABC’ means Australian-Born Chinese, but is often used in a derogatory sense.

Ultimately, however, biculturalism has the ability to produce people who are more culturally and socially considerate and who are able to understand and thrive in different cultural and social environments. This means that cultural hybrids are at an advantage in the increasingly globalised dynamics of our world.

The increasing cultural diversity in Australia will mean that biculturalism will only continue to grow within CALD youth, and I believe it is these youth who will serve as the bridge between cultures, effectively interfacing the different cultures and promoting cross-cultural awareness and harmony within Australia.
A Social Media Blueprint for Engaging Young People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds

Dr Kishan Kariippanon

INTRODUCTION

More than ever, the concept of ‘unity in diversity’ is replacing old ideas of the assimilation of one society into another. Social media is being utilised to satisfy the natural need for young people from diverse backgrounds to maintain their unique cultural and intellectual heritage, and to share it with the rest of the world. This power of bringing individuals and communities together no longer relies solely on political, cultural and interfaith leadership.

The ability to value diversity and appreciate differences is neither driven by the press nor community newsletters, but through the initiative of well-intentioned and motivated individuals. The recent example of young people in the Middle East using social media to form alliances and communities of interest in order to reshape their political landscape testifies to this, and can only act as an inspiration to us all.

Social media has become an enabler and a tool for change and progress for many young people including young Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD).

However, the use of the Internet and computers can still be a challenge as digital literacy is a prerequisite to using social media and, despite its usefulness, does pose specific issues of inequity to some young people. Many have never been exposed to digital technology whilst others are limited in their English language skills, with these posing an added barrier to the use of social media.

The aim of this article is to articulate how social media can navigate these barriers and challenges and enable young Australians from CALD background to influence the “owning and shaping of Australia” by first strengthening and supporting their peers and community members in the process of integration and resettlement. Before a discussion of how social media can play a role in the advancement of youth, it is important to understand the fundamental tenets of social media through the lens of “Medicine 2.0”.

FROM MEDICINE 2.0 TO MULTICULTURAL 2.0

The use of social media as a tool for young people from CALD background to develop and to bridge their communities, as illustrated in this article, has been developed from the concept of “Medicine 2.0” published by Dr. Gunther Eysenbach in the Journal of Medical Internet Research (2008). The major aspects that underpin Medicine 2.0 are:

1. Social Networking
2. Participation
3. Apomediation
4. Collaboration
5. Openness.

1. Social Networking involves online connections between people in order to form a complex network that enables the process of collaboration. Social networking is constantly being used by youth to share personal information and events, but it also has the potential to develop into a culture of sharing useful information and knowledge that will benefit their peers and families as they move into adulthood.
2. **Participation** is the principle in social media that places importance on the individual to become empowered and more involved in creating information of value for others. Wikis [websites that allow users to add and update content] are a good example of how young people from CALD background can create relevant information for specific target groups, for example culturally and linguistically appropriate information developed by Liberian youth for their peers living in the northern suburbs of Darwin.

3. **Apomediation** is a scholarly term that, when applied in the context of multicultural communities and their values of a collective society, is defined as the practice of looking to one another to help guide decisions and opinions instead of being a gatekeeper of information.

4. **Collaboration** in social media is about connecting different groups and skills with each other to increase interaction with a clear outcome in mind to be achieved.

5. **Openness** in the context of social media and youth is about being able to have a presence online to engage with researchers, journalists, academics and politicians on specific issues.

These key aspects that define Medicine 2.0 are transferable to online CALD youth communities or interest groups. Social media then becomes a platform that can allow young people to apply ‘crowdsourcing’ in order to help in their day-to-day interactions and facilitate their navigation of health and community services. The following paragraphs will expand on the principles above, highlighting that harnessing the full benefits that social media has to offer requires creating a new mindset.

**CREATING A NEW MINDSET**

The collectivist nature of young people from CALD background in solving problems and providing support can be further strengthened through the use of social media. Social media allows for information to be created and knowledge to be shared with simple user-friendly tools.

**Videos (tutorials and/or narratives) can be produced by young people on how they managed to access services, look for employment or accommodation, or make an appointment with a health provider, with these videos then uploaded and shared on YouTube for other members of their community to view.**

The videos can be produced in a specific language and for a specific locality or community. Peers and families can therefore watch these videos at their own pace and in a language appropriate to them, rather than finding interpreters and/or having to wait for websites to be translated. This format of communication can also be applied to other social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

The challenge of digital literacy can be addressed in the same way. Multicultural Councils and schools across Australia can begin using homemade video tutorials that are designed for specific linguistic groups. A facilitator is required to assist with the first lessons after which the learner, when capable, is happy to navigate the tutorials themselves and thereby liquidate the digital literacy gap.
gap at their own pace and within their
own environment. These tutorials can
be accessed at community centres
where computers with Internet are
available, or at home.

Young people can also be encouraged
to blog, as a form of citizen journalism,
about their experiences and generate
content and discussions in order to
find solutions and options that use
a strengths-based crowdsourcing
approach rather than waiting for
government and non-governmental
agencies to act. Once again these skills
are now easy to learn, as technology
has become very user friendly.

The community today is
armed with tools to create
information and knowledge
that is culturally specific
and can be made widely
available on the Internet.
The result of this form of
collaboration and sharing
of information can only
strengthen the individual’s
self-esteem and serve to
empower the community.
Social media is not only accessible
on a computer. It is also accessible
on mobile phones that are Internet
capable and this makes information
literally available in the palm of your
hand. Just like a pocket dictionary,
anyone with knowledge in using social
media through their mobile phone will
be able to access information privately,
keep in touch with and update their
social networks, participate in Twitter
conferences, and document their
efforts on their blog via their mobile
device.

Further, from an enterprise and service
industry perspective, social media is
an opportunity for companies, service
providers and young consumers to
connect around ideas, products and
programs of support. As young people
of CALD background expand their
networks and influence through social
media, service providers and enterprise
will be able to understand whom they
are trying to reach, and their wants,
needs and social environment.

CONCLUSION
The vision that we must have today for
young people from CALD background
should not only dwell on access to
social media but more on the quality
of their participation and engagement
with technology. Focusing on the quality
of participation with a Medicine 2.0
approach is more capable of directly
influencing the limitations of access and
digital literacy as social media promotes

For a full list of references, please
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Live to Air:
How Community Radio Empowers Young Voices
Rachael Bongiorno, Youth and Women’s Officer, National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters Council

“Radio plays a vital part in entertaining and informing the Oromos in Australia. It is also significant because it is like a gathering that occurs once a week. In the Oromo culture there is a symbolic tree called the ‘Oda’ (Sycamore) where men would gather to resolve certain issues, also for recreation and children and women would perform underneath it. So the Oromo program on 3ZZZ Radio is an ‘Oda’ for the Oromos in Australia.”
Aisha, Oromo youth program 3ZZZ Radio

Whether it’s the 3ZZZ FM Sinhala youth music request program, Neo Voices multicultural youth on Radio Adelaide, Africa the Beautiful on 6EBA Radio in Perth or the Japanese program on 4EB FM in Brisbane, community radio is a chance for the voices of young Australians to be heard across the airwaves and for them to represent their opinions, perspectives, culture, language, identity and community.

Multicultural community radio has had a strong tradition in Australia since the early 1970s and continues to be a vital resource in servicing the settlement, social, linguistic and cultural needs of this diverse population. The power of the media is such that it plays a central role in shaping societal views and has the ability to include or exclude different groups of people.

Having a strong and articulate voice in the media is crucial for the well being of young people in society. It works to validate their perspectives and contributions, facilitate a public engagement with culture and language as well as educate the wider community of their ideas and experiences.

The National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters’ Council (NEMBC) is a national peak advocacy body which supports access and participation in community broadcasting for Australia’s culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Community radio is an important point of access for community dialogue and media participation as it forms a considerable part of the Australian media landscape, with 54% of Australians tuning into community radio each month. This resource is particularly pertinent for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) Australians as the sector broadcasts nearly 2,500 hours of locally produced multilingual radio programs, in over 100 languages each week.

In recognising the value of multicultural community broadcasting, the NEMBC seeks to actively support the access and participation of young people so that they can engage in these public discussions on a community level as well as a broader societal level. Young people are empowered by gaining the media, leadership and communication skills which can lead to potential participation in the mainstream media.

This voice in the media is significant as it gives them a chance to represent themselves and challenge prevailing mainstream media assumptions or stereotypes that they often experience.
It also supports positive community discussions as well as intra- and inter-cultural communication and understanding. Through training and engagement projects, a national youth committee, working with radio stations and community organisations, national youth media conferences and a soon to be launched online multimedia and multilingual youth radio website, the NEMBC seeks to increase youth media participation and support these forums of social, cultural and linguistic engagement.

Community media participation and the opportunity for self-representation is vital, as the lack of cultural diversity in mainstream media presents very limited occasions of balanced representation and reporting of CALD young people.

What is of particular concern is that this under-representation and sometimes misrepresentation has direct implications for CALD youth’s security, wellbeing, feelings of legitimacy of their presence in public spaces, and their sense of home and belonging in Australia.

For example, when a young woman from Somalia was interviewed by 3CR radio she described the effects that the lack of cultural diversity in the mainstream media and racism has on her feelings of home and belonging in Australia.

“When you’re in your house, you constantly miss your country, if you flick through the TV channels there’s no one that looks like you, there’s no one that represents your issues, it’s not inclusive in that sense … when you step outside and experience racism … you feel like you’re excluded and sometimes people tell you directly [that] you’re not like us and you’re not welcome … it’s really sad”.

Recent research reports have not only found that some mainstream media reports can be detrimental to CALD youth, but that young people have limited skills and knowledge to counter any misleading media. The Springvale Monash Legal Service report, ‘Boys you wanna give me some action? Interventions into Policing into Radicalized Communities in Melbourne’, published in 2010, for example, found that misleading media imagery led to CALD young people feeling that they were ‘outsiders’, ‘foreign’ and ‘not local’ in Australia. More damaging to these young people’s sense of belonging and security in Australia was that some of the media misrepresentation focused public paranoia on African young people congregating in public spaces, including parks, outside shops, on the streets and even the outside areas of their own homes.

Similarly, researchers for the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission report ‘Rights of Passage: The experiences of Australian Sudanese Young People’ were repeatedly told that “there was a general fear of the media and a feeling that the media misrepresented African-Australians generally and Sudanese-Australians specifically”.

The researchers also reported that ‘There was a sense in the community that only ‘bad’ stories made the news and that this was disproportionate to the reality’.

This limited reporting also contributes to a lack of understanding around cultural communities, racism, and presents challenges to social inclusion in Australia.

Part of community radio’s appeal is that it is a highly accessible medium for media participation. Often defined as radio for the people by the people, community broadcasting differs from commercial and public broadcasting in that it has a large participatory component allowing community members to contribute to the public space that is radio broadcasting. No prior experience is required and free or low cost entry level training is provided by the radio station.

Community broadcasting gives young people the chance to have a voice in the media and provides a forum to express their ideas, experiences, language, culture and identity through talks, music and arts programs. This facilitates cultural and linguistic continuity and development as well as increases in self-esteem, and is a rare opportunity for self-representation in the public sphere. Furthermore, it also challenges the hierarchy of the dominant culture and language in the media and society. This in turn works to strengthen multiculturalism and counter racism.

Moreover, community broadcasting’s participatory, non-commercial and collaborative ethos also promotes cultural, social and linguistic meeting places and communication spaces, which are unlikely in other settings.

The co-operative, independent and creative nature of community broadcasting encourages innovation, diversity and self-representation.

In this way, community broadcasting becomes a site of difference, which creates a unique and rare opportunity for ‘equal dialogues’ that encourages understanding and social inclusion. Community broadcasting is also a site of cultural and linguistic negotiation with, for example, members of different ethnic backgrounds able to participate in a language or multicultural program together and, through their differences, open up understanding and common ground.
Mohammed El-leissy, a young Australian of Egyptian heritage, has been involved in community broadcasting for a number of years, producing programs on 3CR Radio, Channel 31 and SYN. All the programs which he has been involved with aim to provide an alternative viewpoint to what is being produced in the mainstream media and facilitate a better understanding of different cultures.

El-leissy believes that “while the mainstream media can sometimes give a voice to communities outside the majority culture of Australia, you really see the true diversity of this country in community broadcasting. Also, when you have to present a program on multicultural issues, it forces you to think about issues, culture and identity in ways that you wouldn’t usually think of in any other setting.”

The NEMBC seeks to utilise new media platforms in order to support innovative communication and the participation of young people in community broadcasting, and to respond to the trends of media consumption and creation which are increasingly moving online. With its national youth committee, the NEMBC has developed a multimedia website which will host locally produced multilingual and multicultural youth radio programs and podcasts which can be listened to as well as downloaded and replayed on other stations.

This has the potential to connect dispersed communities of young people and allow them to engage and negotiate culture, language and identity in a creative and innovative way beyond the confines of their immediate community. It also opens up the possibility for communication across diasporas with young people expressing their cultural identities and identifying with a number of communities. In this way the website opens up the opportunity for CALD youth to use community media to communicate and create a space for self-representation and belonging which can transcend boundaries of nation, culture, religion and language.

If you would like to find out about getting involved in community broadcasting or current opportunities please contact the NEMBC on (03) 9486 9549 or youth@nembc.org.au or www.nembc.org.au
Homelessness is a nation-wide social epidemic affecting people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds. It affects families, the elderly, single parents and young people. It destroys lives in its stripping of the confidence and dignity of people. In Australia, homelessness has reached epic proportions with a wide range of social implications and thus requires urgent action by government at all levels.

This paper will attempt to highlight not just the extent of refugee youth homelessness as a significant social problem but also the context in which the problem is manifested and the kind of policy response needed to address it.

It is imperative, at least in my opinion, that we have an appreciation and greater understanding of what homelessness is and its impact on the social fabric of our multicultural society.

“There are many varying degrees of homelessness ranging from people living in insecure, unsafe or unaffordable housing, who are at risk of homelessness, to people living in the street, in parks or squats who are in a state of outright homelessness. Homelessness is not just lack of shelter but also the lack of a safe and nurturing home environment; a place to feel comfortable and settled and a place that is private; where they feel they belong. It may represent a single acute episode in a person’s life, or a condition into which individuals enter and exit repeatedly over the course of their lives” (Council Homeless Persons: 2000).

The 2006 census data found that 35.5% of homeless people were young people. Sadly, little is known about the extent of refugee youth homelessness in Australia. Census data on homelessness does not include country of birth or language spoken, and migration data collection on cultural and ethnic identity, language spoken and visa streams are minimal. Data collected by service providers does not provide an accurate picture of the extent of the problem and inconsistencies also arise in the recording of collected data. What is known, however, shows a high rate of homelessness amongst refugee youth. A service provider for highly disadvantaged refugee youth in Melbourne, iEmpower, has reported that 76% of its clients are homeless. These young people, who are known to many of their peers as ‘couch surfers’, have nowhere to go and are in desperate circumstances.

Young refugees are six to ten times more likely to become homeless than other young people.

For instance, Mackanzie (2000) highlighted the significance of incidence in homelessness for refugee young people in schools alone. It is well known that the experience of refugees is one of homelessness, dislocation and displacement, and to be twice homeless is both painful and undignifying.

In 2007-2008 Youth Development Australia conducted the first National Youth Commission inquiry into youth homelessness. The process held 21 hearings throughout Australia, received input from 319 people, and examined 91 written submissions. The inquiry was resourced by philanthropic...
funds from the Caledonia Foundation. The inquiry found that "young people become homeless because of family breakdown, often stemming from parental conflicts or a collapse of their relationship with a husband/wife or partner". Whilst this can be true for many young people, refugee young people are in a unique and distinct position because of their lack of support systems networks and pre arrival circumstances.

Many young refugees have serious psychological and emotional trauma with which they have not dealt adequately and in a meaningful way. This combined with economic hardship and pre arrival experiences puts refugee youth at an even greater risk than their peers from "mainstream communities" to remain within a chronic cycle of homelessness.

Young refugees are often isolated from their own communities and welfare systems as a whole, and are thus unable to even have the opportunity to express their circumstances and the daily complex problems they face because of homelessness. A particular cause for concern is that they are often seen as helpless and irresponsible by their own communities, as if their homelessness is their own fault. Added to this is also the impact of intergenerational conflict on this very vulnerable group in society. Many young refugees have become homeless because they could not live in peace with their parents or relatives. Research has proven that homelessness can cause mental health issues.

As many homeless refugee youth spend much time on the streets while trying to find their next couch to sleep on, they are often seen as trouble makers and instigators of anti-social and criminal behaviours. The lack of recognition from society of the daily problems associated with a homeless lifestyle, particularly for young refugees, has resulted in clashes with police and law enforcement agencies.

This is even more difficult for young refugee women and particularly those from Muslim backgrounds who are subjected to racism and discrimination. It is also widely recognised, as found through discussions with major housing providers and services to the homeless, that staff who deal with homeless refugee youth lack the cultural competency to fully understand and address the needs of their clients.

The absence of consistent information systems used by service providers to record, analyse and interpret data on homeless refugee youth has limited providers in sharing knowledge, information and effective practices.

This lack of adequate housing stock resulted in years of neglect by policy makers mistakenly believing everyone was comfortable, as the country increased in wealth and prosperity through the successes of the mining boom, and this increased demand for public housing in unprecedented percentages. Refugee youth are disadvantaged by lack of adequate language, limited prior knowledge of the system, and difficulties with negotiating the often complicated housing priority list.

Providers of the Federal Government Refugee Settlement programs must take into account, as part of their risk assessment process, the potential for
some young refugees to be homeless within the settlement allowable period. They need to develop early intervention measures involving local housing providers as part of the case co-ordination plan for individual settlers. To do this, service providers will also need to develop relationships and protocols for working in partnership with housing providers so that they are able to flag, early on, those who are at risk of becoming homeless. More than ever, policy makers from the department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) will need to work cohesively to form a holistic government response to this growing problem.

It is widely recognised that homelessness amongst refugee youth will not disappear overnight, but we also know more can be done within the limits of available resources to minimise the impact of homelessness on future generations.

We also know housing affordability stress is now a reality. This means the risk of homelessness amongst vulnerable sections of our community has increased and thus we need to give the policy response the weight it deserves. Government at all levels must work on service co-ordination and integration both vertically, involving decision makers, and horizontally, enabling other departments to be involved in providing holistic joined up solutions.

At the micro level, there needs to be an information system that enables welfare providers to measure not only the extent, but the depth, of the problem. This may require a deliberate and well thought out research strategy involving case studies and other forms of qualitative study. Furthermore, we need to know the effectiveness of the various programs funded by both the Commonwealth and State Governments. Program evaluation should include questions about outcomes gained by refugee youth.

Current programs such as Crisis Accommodation, Transitional Housing, and Public Housing must take into account that the homelessness experience of refugee youth is unique and requires culturally competent responses. One of the main concerns demanding investigation includes an explanation and evaluation of the criteria designs for accessibility to public housing and its application. Accordingly, the relative disadvantages of this method are to be measured to establish sound priority listings for public housing.

This paper, in its attempt to highlight the plights of the homeless, has explored the extent of the issue, the way in which policy response ought to be formulated and how service providers need to work collaboratively to minimise the impact of homelessness on refugee youth. I also recognise that more needs to be done so that we have sound knowledge of the extent of the problem and can formulate robust policy responses to it.

For a full list of references please contact Abeselom Nega on email at abeselom@iempower.com.au.
Students Without Borders
Arfa Noor, Community Project Officer, Victorian Immigrant and Refugee Women’s Coalition

Over the last three years, debate around the welfare of international students studying in Australia has picked up and harsh light has been shed on the lack of support services available to these students. It is well known that international education is, or rather was, Australia’s third biggest export. We also know that the boom in the number of students coming to Australia was assisted by the then welcoming immigration policy and low dollar rate.

Australia, however, was not prepared for this rapid increase in international student numbers. Educational institutions struggled to find accommodation options for the increasing number of international students and many private colleges opened up to cash in on what they saw as a very lucrative business option. The failure to regulate and streamline the industry promptly and properly saw the ripple effects spreading out to many aspects of the sector. The ones to suffer the most were the students.

International students came to Australia with almost no accurate information about what their situation would be upon arrival, with instead only bright shiny pictures of Australia in their head filling them with high expectations of the future.

With the media’s often sensationalised reporting, Australians have seen students face many different problems and the list has simply kept increasing.

We have all seen played out in the media horror stories of racial abuse, the unbelievably low quality of education provided to students in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector, and accommodation woes such as having 37 students living in one house. Embarrassed, the federal government imposed stricter immigration policies which had the effect of decreasing the number of international student enrolments and leaving thousands of students caught in the lurch.

But there is one set of these students that until recently remained mostly quiet. They were present from the very beginning but separate representation for them was never deemed necessary by emerging players in the international education sector.

The Victorian Immigrant and Refugee Women’s Coalition (VIRWC), however, has a different take on the need for representation.

Over the last seven years, many female international students have spent time at the VIRWC office as students on placement. They are students from universities, TAFEs and private colleges. In addition, the VIRWC has attended to many cases of female international students looking for help for various situations they face.

A lot of people may not see how being a female international student is different but I can assure you that, from personal experience, being a student is hard enough without throwing the words ‘international’ or ‘female’ into the mix.

Limited rights, lack of support networks and little local or legal knowledge put international students in a vulnerable position. Being a female overseas student means that you are more vulnerable, because the issues you face are a combination of those faced by students and those faced by women.

Arfa Noor came to Australia in 2009 as an International Student from Pakistan. After facing the usual overseas student issues during her first year, she decided to get involved in the international education sector to help other international students.

While completing her Bachelor of Business at the Melbourne Institute of Technology, Arfa is actively involved with different organisations like the Australian Federation of International Students (Victoria) as their Deputy President, the Pakistani Students Association of Australia as an Executive Member and the Council of International Students Australia as the TAFE/VET General Member.

Last year, Arfa was employed as the Community Project Officer at the Victorian Immigrant and Refugee Women’s Coalition to implement the DIAC funded ‘Maximizing Female International Students’ Potential’ project.
Sexual harassment is the first thing that comes to mind when considering these issues, whether it is harassment by an employer or landlord. Female international students are particularly vulnerable because the perpetrators know that these students have nowhere to go, and the perpetrators generally follow up their crime with a well-rounded threat. Language barriers, pre-conceived fear of the police, lack of knowledge about their rights, and lack of networks that can be approached for support can all discourage a student from speaking up. Many continue to suffer in silence, not wanting to lose their job or their place of residence. Others do not report the incident because they are afraid that it might negatively affect their student visa.

Domestic violence is another issue that is seldom discussed. When a female student is the victim of domestic violence, things become more complicated if she is also financially dependent on her partner. She is not eligible for temporary housing arrangements offered to citizens or migrants by the government so homelessness could be her only option, unless she has friends who can provide her with shelter.

Vicky* from China is one such example. She had been in an abusive relationship for over two years before her partner asked her to leave his house. Her partner gambled away all her savings. She came to us homeless, broke and too scared to take any legal action against him. With no friends or family to support her, she was desperate for help. The VIRWC advised her to apply for an intervention order. Finding accommodation for her was a challenge. After calling every organisation that we could think of, we finally had to utilise our private networks to find her some place to live in. Adding to her difficult situation was that the local police officers showed lack of understanding of the urgency of her requests to accompany her to her ex-partner’s house to get her belongings. She told us that they always did not seem to believe her and it took three weeks before they finally served the intervention order to Vicky’s ex-partner.

Vicky is now working with VIRWC as a volunteer and actively looking for a job.

Surthi* was a student placement with VIRWC. She has been in Australia as an international student for the past seven years. Despite the fact that she has been in Australia longer than the average international student, her list of friends is still quite short.

“It is difficult. I find it difficult to connect with domestic students because they never seem to understand what I am going through. International students, on the other hand, barely ever have time. They usually have so much going that socialising is the last thing on their mind. Also, our entertainment options are limited. Many of my friends do not have much money to spend and there are not a lot of places around Melbourne that cater to people who follow a certain religion (like halal food for Muslims or vegan options for Sikhs),”

Surthi* had a nervous breakdown and spent two weeks in the hospital due to stress, isolation and depression. She is now diagnosed with a mild yet permanent mental illness. When explaining the causes of what brought her to this point, she said:

“I felt like a failure. I have been studying for so long, yet every time I try to get a job I am rejected for being an international student. They ask me to come back and apply once I have my permanent residency which seems further away with every year that passes due to constant changes to the immigration policy”.

22 AUSTRALIAN mosaic
Over the past few years, the immigration policy has changed a number of times. This has created a lot of uncertainty and concern amongst international students. While many organisations recognise that the government is well within its rights to change its migration policy, one thing that everyone agrees on is that the changes should apply to the new arrivals and not to the students who are already in the country, many of whom are near the end of their courses.

The increased focus on the employer sponsored scheme has further raised concerns about an increasing probability of employer exploitation.

The recent immigration changes impacted most on the students in the VET sector, since it is mainly VET courses that are no longer on the Skilled Occupation List. Many institutes have started to shut down because the number of students has dramatically decreased. In fact, the drop in international student enrolment is being experienced in all sectors.

The VIRWC strongly believes that international students can prove very beneficial to Australia, and not only as a source of revenue. Those who go back to their countries can act as ambassadors and those who choose to stay here will add to Australia’s educated and skill-ready workforce. Female international students, in particular, do not only contribute their skills but the positive values and good work habits to Australian society. The most significant message of 16 female international students interviewed in the VIRWC video documentary ‘Lost in Transition’ was that they were thankful to Australia for having changed their views about being ‘a woman’.

A lot of people complain about international students not actively participating in activities. I disagree about this. **Students want to participate but the problem lies in the fact that the organisers get the basics wrong.**

It is very intimidating for someone who is new to the country and culture to simply show up at an event. The usual reasons are:

“I do not want to go by myself because I will not know what to do.”

“I feel like everyone will stare at me.”

“I am not confident in speaking English and think people will make fun of me.”

VIRWC recently held a leadership camp for female international students. With 56 participants, we were well above our target of 30 students. By getting sponsorship for many students from different organisations and institutes, the students were able to enjoy three days of fun and learning without worrying about the costs. Many of them had never been outside Melbourne before, while others had never been to a camp in their life. They learnt leadership skills, became more confident, and learned about different cultures. Dietary restrictions did not prevent them from enjoying the uniqueness of each culture, with many coming back to help themselves to second and third portions of the halal as well as vegetarian food that was served in the camp! Even though many of the students had been in Australia for a while, this was the first opportunity that they really had to connect with other students and become friends. After this opportunity created by the VIRWC for the different cultures to mingle, I have seen many of the students attending different events as a group, organising birthday dinners together, and even helping each other with jobs and accommodation.

The government and the local community need to change their perception of international students being ‘cash cows’ living a luxurious life in Australia. There are issues and problems that could be addressed to properly support international students, particularly female international students. However, provision of these services should be done in collaboration with international student groups. There are a few organisations in Victoria which tailor their programmes to international students. Unfortunately, these organisations are not adequately supported financially by federal and state governments. Given the immense economic contribution international students bring to Australia, organisations that provide effective specialist services and programs to them deserve to be funded adequately.

*Names have been changed to protect the individual’s identity.*

Graduates of the Women’s Leadership Camp with VIRWC Chair Jeanette Hourani, CEO Melba Marginson and DIAC State Director Settlement Jenny Richards. Fotoholics Professional Photography Services
It is with great pleasure that we invite you to participate in the 2011 FECCA Conference - Advancing Multiculturalism, on 17 and 18 November, in Adelaide, South Australia.

The Conference is being jointly hosted by the Federation of Ethnic Communities’ Councils of Australia and the Multicultural Communities Council of SA Inc.

The Conference will be held at the Adelaide Convention Centre, which is located on the banks of the River Torrens and within easy walking distance of accommodation, restaurants, entertainment and major retail precincts.

The FECCA Biennial Conference is Australia’s pre-eminent multicultural conference. Every two years, the Conference draws together leading decision makers, thinkers and practitioners to discuss and debate key issues that relate to Australia’s cultural and linguistic diversity. These are explored through a series of plenary addresses, panel discussions and presentations. This year, the Conference will explore the theme of Advancing Multiculturalism and promises to be a vibrant and exciting program. Pre-Conference workshops will be held on Wednesday 16 November 2011.

Thank you to all our sponsors for their generous support of the FECCA 2011 Conference.
CONFIRMED CONFERENCE SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

- **The Hon Grace Portolesi MP**, South Australian Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, Minister for Youth, Minister for Volunteers, Minister Assisting the Premier in Social Inclusion
- **Isobel Redmond MP**, South Australian Leader of the Opposition, Member for Heysen, Shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Shadow Minister for ICAC and Shadow Minister for the Arts.
- **Senator the Hon Kate Lundy**, Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs and Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister
- **Maria Vamvakinou MP**, Federal Member for Calwell, Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Migration, Co-Chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Multiculturalism
- **Scott Morrison MP**, Federal Member for Cook, Shadow Minister for Immigration and Citizenship and Productivity and Population
- **Hieu Van Le AO**, Lieutenant Governor of South Australia and Chairman of the South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission (SAMEAC)
- **The Hon Catherine Branson QC**, President of the Australian Human Rights Commission

And many other high profile academics and community leaders.

TOPICS ADDRESSED AT THIS YEAR’S CONFERENCE WILL INCLUDE:

- Multicultural Policy
- Australia’s Current and Future Multicultural Reality
- Reconciliation and Multiculturalism
- Rights, Racism and Social Cohesion
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For more information visit our conference website - link at www.fecca.org.au or contact Victoria at victoria@fecca.org.au.
Refugee Youth Resettlement is a Complex Process
Tshibanda Gracia Ngoy

There are many misinterpretations and misperceptions about refugee youth. When I came to Australia as a refugee youth six years ago, I experienced many challenges. Refugee youth coming to Australia often arrive with no expectations of what Australia will be like. There are lots of factors that can make them feel excluded and disempowered upon their arrival.

But what’s more difficult is their resettlement process. Since my arrival in Australia in July 2005, I have had no choice but to work very hard to reach the standard of my colleagues, and this has only been possible with the help of individuals and community organisations.

From my experience as a refugee youth and as a caseworker for refugee families, the major areas that mostly impact on refugee youth during their resettlement process include education, intergenerational conflict and employment.

Before going further into these issues, I believe that the title ‘refugee’ carries a lot of negative connotations, stereotypes and generalisations for refugee youth. When my family arrived in July 2005, there were not many refugees, especially from African backgrounds. I was ashamed to carry the title of ‘refugee’ because even at school, I was regarded as someone with less ability, unintelligent, dependent, and illiterate with high traumatic experience. Unfortunately, these associations are still made today. I know some young people who are so disempowered by this so-called ‘refugee’ label. They refuse to obtain a job, or commit to school or break the law simply because they believe that they have an excuse because they are from a refugee background.

An issue of great impact is education; I am one of the lucky refugee youth who obtained an education before arriving in Australia. Despite this advantage, I found myself struggling because of the differences between the two education systems – the one I left in my home country and the new one I found in Australia – as well as the language difficulties. With this I found myself working twice as hard as others; firstly to understand what the school work was all about, and secondly to reach the standard of my colleagues because this is what is expected from us.

Another challenge was, and still is, to prove that I am not just a ‘refugee’ but an individual with ability.

This applies to all other refugee youth. I had to beg at school to not be placed into the lowest Maths and English classes, and I worked hard to prove my ability, but the sad thing is not all refugee youth have the drive to fight for themselves and their rights.

For young people like me, we often feel like we are living in two different worlds. For example, outside of home I am Australian, but at home I am Congolese. We feel obliged to retain our culture, and on the other hand we also feel obliged to integrate into society. For some young people, this
can be a very difficult challenge and they can lose their sense of identity and belonging. It has not been an easy process, but I have learnt to accommodate the two cultures. I am not ashamed of who I am or where I come from, I am proud to be a Congolese-born Australian.

Employment issues also have an immense impact in the lives of refugee youth. Many refugee youths are unable to find and maintain employment. While it is important to consider the location or the environment in which one lives, in general terms it’s very difficult for refugee youth to obtain employment. **How do youth find work if they do not have any work experience and are in competition with the mainstream?**

There is a lot of pressure from the community with expecting refugee youth to perform as well as the mainstream regardless of the distinct barriers they face or the limited time frame they may have been in Australia. Many like myself face difficulties attaining employment as while we may have the ability to perform the job well, our lack of working experience related to the job, combined with the fact that we are competing with Australian-born youth, means that we are given very little or no consideration.

Therefore I believe there is still a lot of work that should be done to help refugee youth during their settlement process. It’s up to the community to make this resettlement process enjoyable and successful. As a community we can empower and help refugee youth make Australia their home in all aspects of their wellbeing.

One mistake that the community makes is to generalise refugee youth without taking into consideration that they are all individuals with ability. I believe the government and the community can create opportunities for these youths to become effective members of society by creating scholarships, traineeships and apprenticeships in different sectors targeting refugee young people to establish themselves professionally. Many refugee youth, like all youth in Australia, are highly capable and gifted, but they lack opportunities to show this.
Engaging CALD Youth with Centrelink Services
Karen Long, Acting National Manager, Multicultural Services Branch, Centrelink

Australia’s increasing population of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD) has important implications for Centrelink’s service methods and how it communicates with its customers.

CENTRELINK’S CALD YOUTH CUSTOMER GROUP
As at November 2010, there were nearly one million Centrelink customers between the ages of 16 and 25. This represented 35.5 per cent of Australia’s 16-25 year olds – meaning that one in three of Australia’s 16-25 year olds are youth or student customers (Centrelink statistics).

Centrelink’s youth and students customer segment is very diverse and many of Centrelink’s youth and student customers speak a language other than English at home. The 2006 Census revealed that while 79 per cent of young people speak English at home, there was a significant population of around 27,000 people aged 15-24 years who could not speak English well or at all.

When communicating and engaging with young people, Centrelink considers the huge range of backgrounds, circumstances and English competencies that make up the CALD group.

CALD YOUTH COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES
Current communication approaches tend to assume that students and young people from a CALD background have certain preferences for how they receive information. While it is sometimes assumed that this customer group prefers translated content and that they have less proficiency with English and competencies with technology, this may not necessarily always be the case.

In fact, recent analysis of Centrelink’s self service facilities – where customers can access services online or on the phone – showed that self service usage in many locations with a high number of people from a CALD background was comparable to that of other locations with only small numbers of these customers.

The relatively high level of use of self service facilities within the CALD group indicates that these customers may not have very different expectations when it comes to how Centrelink communicates with and engages its customers. These results demonstrate the potential of using computer and online-based methods of communication with all young customers from a CALD background.

USING SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS TO ENGAGE YOUTH
Centrelink is using popular online social networking platforms to communicate with its young customers, including the CALD group. Social media can include discussion forums, social networks and wikis (interactive websites), accessed online through desktop computers and mobile devices such as laptops and Smartphones.
In the future, more of Centrelink’s communication with customers will be conducted via the internet, email and SMS. This is in line with youth and student expectations, according to research undertaken by Inside Story for Centrelink in 2009.

In February 2011, Centrelink launched Student Update on Facebook and Twitter. Student Update offers regular information about its services, engaging youth and students in a forum where they already discuss government services that are important to them.

These new Facebook and Twitter accounts enable anyone – youth, students, Centrelink staff and third parties like universities – to quickly access timely information relevant to study and youth services offered by Centrelink. They can engage Centrelink in conversation by posting questions, feedback and comments. This media offers a useful avenue for Centrelink to harness the thoughts, suggestions and perceptions of customers to help create services that are more responsive to young people’s needs.

Interest in the accounts has grown since the launch in April 2011, with the number of weekly active users on the page peaking at more than 1,300 on 14 May. The Student Update Twitter account has also proved popular with student offices of major universities, which have been able to retweet (forward on) important information for their students. This number is expected to grow as the accounts are further promoted.

These social media platforms consolidate information for students and young people in the online space. They are also useful for providing up to date information for community organisations and other external stakeholders that deal with Centrelink customers.

We know that the potential is there for the CALD audience to successfully use these forums along with the general population. Recent evidence suggests that uptake within these customer groups can be maximised using information sessions, with an interpreter where necessary.

Social media and interactive sites can give CALD youth equal opportunity to have their say about Centrelink services and to ensure it is accurately capturing the voice of Australian youth. This will help Centrelink continue to provide responsive programs and services.

The Commonwealth Budget was handed down on 10 May 2011. The following measures may impact customers from a CALD background, in particular, youth and students. Visit www.humanservices.gov.au/budget to read more about these measures in full:

- **Improving Returns to Work** – Youth Allowance (other) recipients will be able to more than double the amount they can earn before their income support payments are affected.

- **Transition Support for Early School Leavers** – early school leavers may be eligible for Transitional Support. This will help them successfully transition to further study, training or employment.

- **Compulsory Participation Plans and Support for Teenage Parents** – this measure will be implemented in ten specific locations, including areas with a high density of people from a CALD background such as Bankstown and Shellharbour in NSW. It will apply to Parenting Payment recipients who are 19 years old or younger.

- **Continuation of the Improving School Enrolment and Attendance through Welfare Reform Trial** – the income support payments of parents may be suspended if their children are of compulsory school age and not enrolled in or attending school. The aim of this measure is to improve the educational outcomes for children.
Your Views Matter:
Australia’s National Youth Peak
Advocating for the Rights of Young People

Maia Giordano, Deputy Director (Young People),
the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition (AYAC)

Maia Giordano is Deputy Director (Young People) of the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition (AYAC), Australia’s non-government youth affairs peak body, which was founded in an unfunded capacity in 2002 but has recently been funded.

AYAC aims to provide a body broadly representative of the issues and interests of young people and the youth affairs field in Australia; represent the rights and interests of young people in Australia at both national and international levels; advocate for, assist with and support the development of policy positions on issues affecting young people and the youth affairs field, and provide policy advice, perspectives and advocacy to Governments and the broader community.

Prior to joining AYAC, Maia worked in advocacy for youth volunteers at the NSW state peak for volunteering, responsible for educating young people about volunteering and advocating that not-for-profit organisations engage young people. She is the former Vice President of Invisible Children Australia, an innovative youth organisation that aims to end the use of child soldiers in Northern Uganda. Maia also has experience in local and state government as well as completing her Human Geography Honours research on implementing the UN Child-Friendly Cities model in Australia.

Young people often do not have the opportunity to have a voice and represent themselves on issues that affect or concern them. The Australian Youth Affairs Coalition (AYAC) aims to represent the rights and interests of all young people aged between 12 and 26 years old at the national level. AYAC provides policy advice to government and the broader community, as well as promoting youth participation among the government and community in general.

However, the particular needs and issues of CALD young people are often overlooked in the broader youth sector and under-represented in policy work at a government level. AYAC works closely with the Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN) – a national policy and advocacy body that represents the rights and interests of migrant and newly arrived young people – to ensure that the concerns of this group of young people are reflected in our work. MYAN has been a strong partner of AYAC for a number of years. The MYAN was involved in establishing the infrastructure of AYAC, and the National Co-ordinator of MYAN is the current chair of our Policy Advisory Council. AYAC often works with MYAN in policy and advocacy work to highlight the needs and rights of multicultural young people.

In all our advocacy work, as the national youth peak body representing the interests of all young people, AYAC always aims to consider and include the voices of young people from all walks of life, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The following describes some of AYAC’s recent work:

MULTICULTURAL POLICY

AYAC recently made a submission to the Inquiry into Multiculturalism in Australia. In our submission AYAC commended the government’s new multicultural policy as an important step in recognising that cultural diversity strengthens a sense of identity and connection for all Australians – particularly young people, who represent the future of multiculturalism.

AYAC also argued that multiculturalism must be incorporated into the Federal Government’s social inclusion agenda for it to genuinely provide a framework for social and economic inclusion for all.

With regard to settlement programs that support the full participation of migrants and refugees in Australian society, AYAC advocated for youth-specific settlement programs that are targeted to the particular needs of young people. As the national youth peak body, AYAC considered it particularly important to make a submission to this Inquiry and commend the government’s new multicultural policy.

COMMONWEALTH COMMISSIONER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

AYAC also recently made a submission in response to the Commonwealth Commissioner for Children and Young People Bill 2010. In this, we advocated for the introduction of an independent body with the power to monitor and analyse issues that impact children and young people so that young people can have their rights fully
recognised, regardless of racial, social or religious background.

AYAC argued that the establishment of a Commissioner would, in particular, benefit children living in immigration detention, as well as those seeking visas and citizenship whose interests have often been unseen or disregarded.

DISABILITY STANDARDS FOR EDUCATION

AYAC conducted an online survey of almost 400 young people with a disability and their parents to promote the government the experiences of young people with a disability who are getting an education. We believe strongly that young people with a disability have a right to have their say on such an important issue as access to education. The results of this survey formed the core part of our submission and recommendations to government.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION

In 2010, AYAC released a research report on how young people’s involvement impacts on decision-making in organisations and whether there is a measurable difference both in the organisations they are engaged with or on wider public policy issues. AYAC will be developing a package of resources to encourage government and organisations to include young people on boards and committees. AYAC hopes this project will ensure more young people from a range of backgrounds and experiences have the opportunity to share their views. AYAC is committed to genuine participation of young people in all of its work.

CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED

Join Us

AYAC values and respects the experience of individual young people, believing that all young people are experts in their own experience. AYAC has a growing list of young people who we contact with opportunities to have a say on a range of issues. If you would like to join our network and get updates on opportunities to give feedback on a range of issues email maia@ayac.org.au.

AYAC is committed to promoting the fuller participation of young people in Australian society. Young people are often excluded from decision-making processes and we want all young people to be resourced and empowered to have a say! AYAC believes it is vital to have the experience of multicultural youth included regardless of the issue, so that we can advocate for change with a united voice.

Plan Youth Consultations

PLAN Australia is an international child rights organisation working with youth-led organisations and AYAC to conduct consultations in South Australia, Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales as well as through an online survey.

The youth consultations and survey will add the voice of young Australians on a local, national and international level, about what issues are important to them, across topics of social justice, action, and how they want to be involved in social action.

AYAC is involved by connecting PLAN to youth organisations or groups who are interested in hosting a consultation and having young people share their views and experiences.

If you would like to host a consultation or find out more, contact Jacqui McKenzie via jacqui@ayac.org.au.

One of AYAC’s strengths is its vast national networks of youth-led organisations, youth sector bodies and young people. By being connected to us there are loads of opportunities to share your views on the issues that matter most to you. If you would like to connect with AYAC email Maia Giordano via maia@ayac.org.au or visit our website: www.ayac.org.au
Knowledge on cultural issues and diversity have slowly become Seher Ozonal’s forte in the regional town that she lives in, which is comprised of people from 65 cultures and nationalities. Seher has a passion for promoting social justice and human rights. She has largely been influenced by her Kurdish background and having watched the impact of the migration process on her parents.

In 2008 Seher completed her thesis as a partial fulfilment of her Bachelor of Social Work. She investigated health and community services access issues for culturally and linguistically diverse communities in her regional town in Victoria. This year Seher commenced work in an education institute as a student wellbeing officer working with youth, mature aged students, indigenous students and international students. She loves being able to actively integrate her skills and knowledge in such a diverse setting.

In 2008 I completed my thesis in which I investigated health and community services access issues for culturally and linguistically diverse communities in my regional town in Victoria. My qualitative study focused on and explored the lived experiences of people focusing on three areas: access issues, unmet needs and subjective recommendations to health and community services. The following points arose from my research:

**ACCESS ISSUES**

There were several significant access barriers to health and community services – which were the language barrier, confidentiality, shame and stigma.

All participants reiterated that the language barrier acted not only as an access barrier to health and community services but as a major stressor in everyday life, particularly in terms of employment opportunities. One participant quoted “we need the confidence to go to such services without fearing that we will be judged, ridiculed or laughed at because of our language barrier”. One other participant stated “our people work in the agricultural sector blocks mainly because of our language barrier; we do not have as many work rights and we are more prone to injuries”. Alongside the language barrier, participants recognised that concerns over confidentiality, shame and stigma would prevent CALD people from accessing health and community services in regional towns. The participants highlighted that concerns over confidentiality are particularly relevant to mental health services. One participant stated ‘we would feel embarrassed, uncomfortable, and guilty if people [saw] us at a service and this would probably aggravate the situation’.

**UNMET NEEDS**

Participants explained that there was a general need for all health and community services for CALD people in regional areas. Participants were read the statement ‘1 in 5 people in Australia experience a mental illness at some point in their life’ and were then asked if these statistics were applicable and relevant to their cultural community. All participants reported that they thought these figures might be higher for their own community group.

Participants explained that everyday life stressors were the reasons behind their assumption that mental health levels are higher, with these stressors including the language barrier and lack of employment opportunities.

The participants stated that they would refer the characters in the case-study vignettes to health and community services either in the first instance to a doctor, followed by referral to a health professional. These findings were interesting given that only 25% of the participants had knowledge of health and community services. The findings also indicated that participants believed that vulnerable, older people, females and teenagers would be more likely to access health and community services.
PARTICIPANT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Participants had several recommendations for regional health and community services in the context of working with CALD people. Participants constantly raised the idea of establishing a community centre to house regular social gatherings for CALD community groups. The reason given for establishing such community centres was to help CALD groups build a sense of community.

Participants indicated specifically that a reference person or group should be established within community centres so CALD people could have their say in matters that affected them. Reference groups would also play the role of inviting service providers to have links with various CALD groups. Participants also recommended informing CALD people about services through translated and interpreted advertisements. One suggestion was publishing and distributing a translated ‘yellow pages’ for health and community services in regional areas. Participants placed strong emphasis on employing bilingual workers and also utilising telephone and face-to-face interpreting services. Participants also encouraged workplaces to promote cultural awareness and empathy among health professionals, as this would assist people in feeling more at ease when attending such services.

IMPLEMENTATION OF FINDINGS

I was lucky enough to be employed by a local agency for 12 months to implement health promotion projects which focused on the findings of my thesis. The results showed a 45% increase in CALD people accessing a particular health service in that regional area.

HOW DO THESE FINDINGS RELATE TO CALD YOUTH LIVING IN AUSTRALIA?

Drawing upon my research findings as well as personal and professional experiences, I feel that issues within certain CALD communities are generally transferable across CALD communities in general; including both newly arrived and already established communities. I have networked with around 20 CALD communities in my regional area on both a professional and personal level.

For the purposes of this article I’d like to raise two important issues, evident in my research, that pertain to CALD youth. These are proficiency in English and juggling two or more cultures.

PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH

Proficiency in the English language is amongst the most significant issues for CALD youth. Having limited English language skills can be paralysing both socially and economically, and is a major contributor to psychological conditions such as depression and anxiety. Young people who have newly migrated with their families are affected by the language barrier as much as their parents. The length of stay in Australia is not always a reliable indicator of how well a person can speak English. My parents were in their early twenties when they first arrived in Australia and have lived here for 24 years. English is their third language and they sometimes struggle to express themselves.

Research shows that people who are 20 years or older have a fully developed brain, and therefore often find it much more difficult to learn a new language. The chemistry around brain development supports the theory behind children learning and adapting at a much more increased rate than older people.

Often CALD youth are the point-of-call for their family members when language is an issue. I’ve seen a lot of
young people in my own community
take on the role of translator and
interpreter for their families, even
though the law may stipulate
otherwise. It can sometimes be a
burden for young people to assume
these extra responsibilities within their
family. I know of one young person
who is perceived as a main contact
for his community, and he is always
in demand to help his community.
He often gets asked to assist his
fellow community members, but this
impacts on his ability to carry out
his school work and have a social
life, and also results in higher stress
levels. Following the language barrier
I find that the next significant issue for
young people is related to maintaining
and preserving their mother tongue
and culture.

BALANCING AND LIVING TWO
OR MORE CULTURES

Having one foot in two or more
cultures can be hard to juggle. I raise
this point equally for newly arrived
CALD youth and youth that were born
in Australia. Culture and language
are two crucial factors in what
defines our identity. Before I explain
this point further I’d like to indicate
that the World Health Organisation
has 16 key determinants of health
and wellbeing for all people. Out of
these 16 concepts, four specifically
relate to culture and community.

These are social exclusion, social
connection, discrimination, and social
environments. For a CALD person, this
means that their chance for a healthy
life is based on how well they are
connected to their own culture, how
well they are accepted in society, and
whether or not they are included in the
life of the community.

As a result of the migration and
settlement process it is almost
inevitable for CALD youth to have
difficulties in conforming to society.

Many people believe that it is
human nature to conform, but I feel
this can be problematic for CALD
young people if they become so
integrated into a foreign culture that
their own native culture and mother
tongue become neglected or even
forgotten. There are external factors
that contribute to CALD youth not
becoming familiar with their native
cultures, which may include fears of
being racially oppressed, excluded,
or discriminated against. Perhaps, for
some CALD youth, being integrated
into the main culture acts as a shield
against such issues.

The question is what is the impact on
CALD youth who are trying to balance
living in two or more cultures? Which
culture is given priority and why?
More importantly, what happens to
the preservation of culture, family and
identity? Does a resistance emerge in
cultural values and beliefs? And does
the family dynamic become altered?

I think it is fair to indicate that living
in two or more cultures can impact
on CALD youth, families, community
and cultural identity. However, I
am not assuming this to be the
case for all CALD youth as we are
all individual. I also understand
that some CALD youth are very
protective of their cultural identity
and own it very well.

I’m quite a visual person so
to conclude this article I’d like
to use the analogy of a spider
in a tree. Think of the trunk/
foundation as being formed of the
concepts of social connectedness,
social inclusion, freedom from
discrimination, sense of community,
language skills and balancing two
or more cultures. Think of the off
shooting branches which contain
everyday issues for CALD youth
including family issues, relationship
issues, mental health issues,
economic issues and education
issues and social exclusion. The
branches/issues are often symptoms
of the root causes which will have
some sort of connection to the
foundation. Therefore, issues can be
interrelated and intertwined a bit like
a spider running up and down the
tree making a cobweb.
A Voice for the Voiceless
Peter Ajak, Project Officer, Ethnic Youth Council

Our world is shrinking; multiculturalism is the simplest evidence of this. I came to Australia in 2003, and Australia was different then than it is now. Many Australians used to think Africa was a country in itself and, back where I came from, people thought Australia was the same as America. Over time, people from different countries learnt more about each other and about changes in the world. Given the nature of Australia today, multiculturalism is the best option we have for learning about and understanding each other. When people think that multiculturalism cannot work, young people often suffer the consequences. Our politicians sometimes pay more attention to what divides Australians than what unites Australians. This is the time to prepare young people for a multicultural future rather than teach them the divisive views created by the media and some politicians. A wise woman once wrote, ‘If you want children to keep their feet on the ground, put some responsibility on their shoulders’.

Five years ago a group of youths from culturally and linguistically diverse background from Melbourne metro north found its voice through the Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre (SMRC). These young people, aged 15-25 years, are the heart of diversity; they come from varied religious and nonreligious backgrounds, nationalities, and arrived in Australia at different times. Ethnic Youth Council (EYC) was the name chosen by the group members. This name was chosen because we all have an ethnicity.

Young people are often generalised as engaging in reckless behaviours, and youth from culturally and linguistically diverse communities (CALD) are particularly stereotyped in this way. Somehow, there is a resonating misunderstanding among most media outlets, some politicians, and even some police officers, that youth who come from countries at war have no respect for law.

Violence of any kind is terrible in itself, and exaggerating it can harm the Australian public more than the people who were involved in a fight. Over the Easter break, it was reported that more than one hundred Sudanese youth where involved in a brawl, and yet only three people sustained injuries. It is good that not many people were injured. However, it had to be a miracle for such a massive scale brawl to result in only three injuries. This was an example of the media exaggerating violence amongst CALD youth.

We need to give CALD youth proportional representation in the media and acknowledge them for their achievements. This will encourage them to shoulder responsibilities. If most media reports are true about CALD young people, then it would mean that the system is failing them. Did anyone look into this? Moreover, if these reports are fantasies, what are the consequences for our youths? What sort of messages are we feeding them? That they are all incapable of achievement? That their cultural background has already determined their fate? I have been watching news

Peter Ajak arrived in Australia under the Australian Humanitarian Refugee Program in 2003. He joined the Ethnic Youth Council (EYC) in 2006 and was awarded the Victorian Refugee Recognition Record (VRRR). Peter studied a Bachelor of Arts from 2007 to 2009 at Latrobe University. Peter is currently working with Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre as an EYC Project Officer. In 2010, Peter also worked on ‘Challenging Racism: A guide for young people’, a project by Western Young People’s Independent Network. In the midst of the above, Peter still finds time to volunteer for the Sudanese Radio Program at 3ZZZ community radio.
for the nearly eight years that I have been in Australia. When a CALD youth misbehaves, s/he is identified by country of her/his origin, even when s/he is an Australian citizen. However, if they did extremely well to the level that they are worth reporting on, they are Australian citizens. Who you are should be who you choose to be.

I am yet to see a community or racial group with a makeup of a higher percentage of criminals than law-abiding members. Unfortunately, I feel that newspapers and the police are making it seem like such communities exist. I believe that articles such as, ‘Violence a way of life’ in the Herald Sun on 28 April 2011 is not correct, indicating crimes are racial and geographical. The article listed seven countries of birth of which Australia was not on the list.

I read this article several times. Somehow, it seems as if crime only came to Australia’s shores with the arrival of the communities listed in the article. I am not sure if this is the case, maybe we need to think this through a bit more. Here is the point I am making: there are far too many negative reports about CALD youth. If your ability to integrate is restrained by negativity from the sources that are responsible for your transition, what are your chances of integrating? If your past life, which was not your fault, casts a cloudy shadow over everything you are today, what are your chances of employability?

It seems like much of the Australian media and many politicians are not interested in the contribution of CALD communities. For the media to help make Australia a better place for all Australian citizens and residents, it needs to have balance in news reports rather than vilifying and scapegoating CALD youth, and should introduce more programs that encourage unity among all Australians.

‘With great power comes great responsibility’, I learnt this from a movie about a character with unusual powers. Let us teach our youth responsibilities such as how to work with each other but also, and most importantly, how to identify problems and be able to name them.
Youth Engagement Through Sport: An Ethnic Communities’ Council of Victoria Policy Initiative, in Association with Springvale Neighbourhood House
Ross Barnett, Director, Ethnic Communities’ Council of Victoria

This month ECCV will launch the Multicultural Youth Engagement in Sport paper, a policy research initiative which seeks to civically re-engage CALD youth through sport.

In 2010, ECCV established a partnership with Springvale Neighbourhood House and Sports without Borders where in-depth consultations were carried out with migrant communities in the south east of Melbourne. The consultations included members of the Maori, Cook Islander, Burmese, Hazara, Oromo, Hararian, Eritrean and Sudanese communities.

The paper highlights the substantial decline in CALD youth engagement, the challenges faced when trying to access council managed facilities, and recommendations on how to encourage youth engagement.

The three major factors which impact on youth civic engagement include the availability of socio-economic resources, equal access to education and employment resources, and the development of social networks that promote participation.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
SOCIALISATION STRATEGIES – FAMILY AND THE SCHOOL

ECCV research indicates that there are two socialisation strategies which are critical to engaging youth holistically with their communities.

Firstly, civic engagement begins within the family unit. There is growing recognition of the importance of working with the family unit to enhance the capacity of youth, as this is the space where norms around trust and reciprocity are formed. ECCV recommends that youth from ethnic minorities are assisted by specific counselling programs that address intergenerational differences and support parents to develop effective communication.

Moreover, parents must be supported to become civic role models for their children. Family volunteering fosters civic engagement by providing youth with role models who demonstrate their sense of responsibility towards the broader community. If families hold positive attitudes towards volunteering in their community, this can improve their children’s integration and communication with the community at large.

Secondly, school institutions play an important role in socialisation strategies as they have the capacity to reach every young person. Research indicates that schools offering community service opportunities in their curricula and encouraging volunteering experiences in service learning contribute to a civic identity amongst their students.

ECCV believes schools should offer community service opportunities with a youth mentoring component that teach young people about civic engagement.

These two socialisation strategies are crucial to overcoming barriers to engagement. The Springvale Neighbourhood House consultations show the importance of building on these strategies by identifying extracurricular activities as a means to develop civic skills.

Ross Barnett began his career in the multicultural sector while working in the Migrant Services Unit of the Department of Social Security.

Later he moved to the Victorian Ethnic Affairs Commission, where he managed newly established interpreting services for the Justice system.
Ross completed a social work degree at Flinders University in Adelaide where he worked with the Ethnic Communities’ Council of South Australia as a project officer. In this role Ross worked with 13 ethnic groups to establish their ethno-specific aged care facilities.

In 1995, Ross took up the position of Director of the South Eastern Region Migrant Resource Centre (SERMRC) and following this appointment, became Chief Executive Officer of the Russian Welfare Society.

In 2001, Ross left Australia to spend the next five years working in the UK in refugee support agencies before returning to Melbourne in 2006. He is now the Director of the Ethnic Communities’ Council of Victoria.
EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES – SPORT

Research participants agreed that achieving common civic goals must be linked to less civic-oriented activities that are popular amongst youth, namely arts, music and sport. Participants identified structured sport as their favoured approach to youth engagement.

The most important identified benefit of sport was the community capacity-building opportunities that it represents. This includes the development of individual traits such as communication skills, teamwork, sense of fair play, self-respect and conflict resolution.

Social networks are also an important outcome of extracurricular activities. ECCV recommends activities that encourage young people to cooperate towards achieving a common goal. This provides an avenue for youth to build networks and make friends outside their own ethnic groups.

A case example of a successful sports inclusion program identified by the consultation participants was the ‘All Nations Soccer Competition’, run in the City of Greater Dandenong (Victoria) from 2002 until 2006.

The competition was a community-based, ethno-specific, low-cost soccer tournament for newly arrived CALD youth. A total of twelve teams made up from youth from the south-eastern and western suburbs of Melbourne participated in the competitions and it ran for six weeks each year.

The successes of the program included a commitment to equal participation for newly arrived youth; educating newly arrived youth in the processes of structured sport; and linking players from different sporting clubs to encourage socialisation and integration.

Some of the noted challenges included exclusivity of membership related to ethnicity and some instances of inter-ethnic fighting due to historical conflicts in countries of origin. ECCV encourages members of local sporting clubs to avoid being exclusive to single ethnic communities, and to extend to new players from the local area. Opening club membership to different cultural groups within the same local area encourages the formation of cross-cultural relationships across different sporting clubs operating in the same area.

BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

The consultation revealed the main factors impacting on young people’s access to sport include the high cost of club insurance fees and hiring facilities; cost of hiring security personnel to stop inter-ethnic fighting between teams; proximity of facilities; family expectations that youth concentrate on study and employment; and limited access to appropriate information.
New and emerging communities in particular highlighted the shortage of multi-purpose community facilities as a major obstacle to setting up clubs. Research also showed young CALD women faced additional cultural and gendered expectations that acted as a barrier to participation in sport.

ECCV believes more equitable distribution of resources needs to take place to remove institutional, administrative and socio-economic barriers to participation.

In order to raise funds, participants highlighted a range of activities they undertake such as cultural festivals and celebrations, formal graduation nights and one-off youth concerts. ECCV highlights that information on funding opportunities needs to be provided to these communities.

LOCAL COUNCILS

Local councils have a role to play in ensuring access to sports opportunities for CALD youth. Participants highlighted that there is an increased demand for multicultural multi-use community centres to address the shortage of venues as well as inequitable distribution of venues. A Centre for Multicultural Youth consultation revealed some community groups argue their access needs are more specific and important than those of other groups. This indicates some user groups can develop ‘unrealistic ownership expectations’ of facilities and a lack of willingness to share.

Alternatives suggested by the study group include public school grounds. The barriers to overcome in using these facilities include local government requirements and standards in relation to risk management.

CONCLUSIONS

ECCV believes partnerships between councils, community organisations, ethno-specific agencies and schools should be cultivated for the provision of subsidised transport arrangements and alternative meeting spaces for CALD youth. Furthermore, linkages between community groups and the sharing of facilities should be encouraged, where a minimum quota of hours a week is set aside for youth-based activities.

Youth engagement requires a holistic approach by all of the community, where sport plays a major role. However, we cannot rely on sports-based intervention programs alone to address all of the challenges experienced by CALD youth. Thus, a number of other educational programs must be incorporated into or run alongside these programs with a focus on capacity building.

ECCV advocates for equal access to sporting facilities so that programs such as the ‘All Nations Soccer Competition’ can be emulated. This is the first step to re-engage youth, and the second would be incorporating learning aspects and pathways to programs, where sport is but one of their facets.

ECCV acknowledges Dr Ahmad Al-Mousa for undertaking the research and writing the Multicultural Youth Engagement in Sport paper. ECCV remains committed to youth policy priorities and has identified mental ill health in CALD youth as another key focus area in 2011.

If you wish to obtain a full copy of Multicultural Youth Engagement in Sport, please contact Susan Timmins, Policy Officer at the Ethnic Communities’ Council of Victoria on (03) 9349 4122, eccv@eccv.org.au or on Twitter via @ethnicvic.
On the Commonwealth Youth Forum

Alan Huynh

The voices and views of young people should be valued within local, national and international communities. In our global society, multilateral forums provide an opportunity for regular dialogue on foreign and strategic policy and economic and financial issues, as well as serving as a conduit for cultural exchange between governments. Parallel youth conferences have emerged as key initiatives in their own right. The Commonwealth of Nations is one such forum, and acts as a key platform for young people to be seen and heard by a global audience of billions.

The Commonwealth Youth Forum (CYF) is one of three parallel fora held during the biannual Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM).

At CYF, young representatives from 54 member nations of the Commonwealth spend up to a week discussing issues focused on thematic areas, which in the past have included youth involvement in decision making, environmental sustainability and peace building.

Discussions culminate in the drafting and ratification of a communiqué, which is the collective expression of the views of the youth representatives present. The communiqué is then presented at CHOGM ministerial level meetings and used as a guide for the development of national youth policy and programs of member nations.

Supplementing the communiqué process are a range of initiatives which serve to enhance the personal development and learning opportunities for the youth delegates. Expert speakers are invited to share their experiences and stimulate discussion on the thematic areas. Skills workshops offer delegates the chance to learn a range of practical competencies which are intended to enhance the delegates’ ability to enact change in their home communities. Finally, cultural ‘learning journeys’ are an opportunity for the host country to showcase its local institutions and heritage, providing visiting youth delegates with an insight into its history and people.

In 2009, the 7th CYF was held in Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean region. Being one of the young Australians at the forum was an incredible privilege. From undertaking advocacy work on behalf of fellow youth in the Pacific region and learning how local natural environments such as the Bucco Reef and the Tobago Rainforest Reserve would be affected by climate change to negotiating draft language for the communiqué as a special rapporteur, the week-long forum was a fantastic cultural and learning experience!

On a more personal level, the event offers a unique opportunity to meet and network with up to 170 young people from a diverse range of countries and cultural, linguistic, personal, and professional backgrounds. Representatives include Commonwealth member nations’ youth caucus (RYC) representatives, chosen to advocate for and represent the views of their country’s youth, who plays a key consultative role in Commonwealth youth initiatives.
Casual conversations during meals or between formal discussion sessions proved to be engaging and informative. Hearing about key issues that affect young people in countries across the Commonwealth and how the youth delegates were seeking to resolve socioeconomic and health issues, address barriers to effective youth participation, and examine potential solutions to alleviate poverty at a grassroots level, were seminal and enlightening.

As host of CHOGM and the 8th Commonwealth Youth Forum in 2011, Australia has a unique opportunity to renew the focus on the role of young people in society. As custodians of future national prosperity and progress, youth have an integral responsibility to advance an active, relevant voice in the dialogue that will shape the way that countries address existing and emerging economic, social and global challenges.

Following on from the United Nations International Year of Youth whereby, for a year, young people have been front and centre, this CYF will serve to build on the publicity around the need for meaningful youth participation worldwide. It will also serve as a key meeting point to discuss the outcomes of the deliberations from the Commonwealth Eminent Persons’ Group, which has been tasked with the responsibility of evaluating the effectiveness of current Commonwealth working processes and frameworks, including youth engagement.

The 8th CYF will build on the groundwork set by preceding youth fora but will also aim to leverage a range of innovative practices to expand and optimize youth engagement opportunities. Under the theme of ‘our Commonwealth, our future’, CYF 8 endeavours to capture that rare sentiment of co-operation, collaboration and the need for a shared response to many of the challenges that confront our global society today.

Young people, particularly those who have an opportunity to attend the Commonwealth Youth Forum and other global conferences, have a mutual responsibility to share the knowledge and contacts gained so as to be actively involved in national public debate. Only then can young people from all backgrounds claim to have not just a ‘youth voice’ but a genuinely concerned and informed view.
Opinion Piece
Views on the News
By Dr James Jupp AM FASSA

There have been so many events in the first half of 2011 that it is hard to know where to start.

Of most lasting importance is probably the death of Osama bin Laden in his home in Pakistan, at the hands of an American special squad. This raised many questions: How could he have lived next to a major military camp near Peshawar without the knowledge of the Pakistan government, armed forces and intelligence organisation? Have these agencies been hiding him and encouraging al-Qaeda and the Taliban? Will bin Laden’s death make any difference to the war in Afghanistan? What is Australia doing there, and should it continue to take part in a war which might have lost its original meaning? If the war is ever won, what is the responsibility of the rich states towards the millions of refugees who need rehabilitating and the enormous damage done to the economy, towns and villages of Afghanistan? What impact will the American success have on the politics of other states such as Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen, Syria, Libya, Somalia and Egypt? Will bin Laden become a hero like Che Guevara or just another failure like Saddam Hussein? These are all questions that might have an impact on Australia. It would be good to think that Australian politicians, journalists, academics and public servants were taking the events in the Muslim world seriously. Sadly, judging by our political and media debates, that does not seem to be the case. As I suggested in the last Australian mosaic, those who expect the revolts in the Middle East to lead directly to liberal democracies may well be disappointed. The same applies to those who have personalised the ‘war on terrorism’ around bin Laden.

Turning to the peace and quiet of Australia, two issues continue to dominate headlines. One is the treatment of asylum seekers, to whom we have legal obligations under the UN Convention. The other is the size, origins and character of the immigration programme. The two are, of course, closely connected. The latest stage of the asylum game involves swapping asylum seekers and refugees with Malaysia. This is fairly novel but may not last very long. While there are wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, post-war problems in Sri Lanka and a theocracy in Iran, there will be refugees in our region. How they get here may change and where they come from may change. But they will not disappear.

Many of our problems could have been avoided by ending the ‘mandatory and irrevocable’ detention policy that ALP minister Gerry Hand introduced in a panic about Cambodian refugees. Now that we know what happened in Cambodia, we should be ashamed that we ever brought in such a policy at all. A policy of ‘optional’ detention, only for identification and health checks, would mean that there was no need for building prison-like camps in remote regions at great expense and holding men, women and children behind razor wire for months on end until some develop mental health issues. This could go along with an increase in the humanitarian quota, which has not responded to the warfare within our region. It might lead to increased numbers, but it would get the women and children out of the camps.

In the anxious atmosphere created by Islamist terrorism and refugees, it is not surprising that some hostility towards Muslims is spreading and damaging multiculturalism. The situation in Australia is not nearly as difficult as in Europe.

Dr James Jupp has been the Director of the Centre for Immigration and Multicultural Studies at the Australian National University since 1988. Born in England, James studied at the London School of Economics. He has held teaching positions in Australia, England, and Canada and has published widely on immigration and multicultural affairs.


In 2004 James was awarded the Order of Australia (AM) for ‘service to the development of public policy in relation to immigration and multiculturalism, to education and to recording Australian history.’
It is a little hysterical, as seen by the reaction to the Muslims Australia (AFIC) request that shariah law be considered by the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Multiculturalism. Muslims Australia (AFIC) made it clear that it wanted to contain shariah law within the laws of Australia, as happens in many other countries, where it applies generally to marriage and divorce and to interest-free banking and mortgages. It already applies to burials and halal butchery. Personally I believe that dual legal systems are full of problems. I also do not like the full burqua, but unlike the French and several other Europeans, I see no argument for banning it. No doubt some people will call for that before the Parliamentary Committee. Hearing various viewpoints is what the Parliamentary Committee is for.

Before we start getting agitated about Muslims we should look at the hysteria which is sweeping over Europe. In elections over the past two years, parties with openly racist and anti-immigrant policies have doubled their votes in Austria, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. These are all prosperous social-democratic states. Similar parties have entered the coalition governments of Italy, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. The news is not all bad. Racist parties were badly defeated in Britain and Germany and their vote declined in France. In Australia, of course, One Nation has disappeared and in New Zealand NZ First scored only four per cent. But in many European states the minority vote is so strong and growing that the larger conservative parties have adopted many of their policies. In Hungary a new party, Jobbik, scored eleven per cent in its first contest. It leads the group of similar reactionaries in the European parliament.

Not everything is so dismal. The Royal Wedding went off perfectly in London, as such occasions always do. It’s what comes afterwards that causes trouble. Only the Queen could have gone over to Ireland and apologised for centuries of oppression to the Irish, who responded with wild enthusiasm. No British monarch had visited Ireland since 1911. It is closer than Tasmania is to Victoria. A long overdue reconciliation. In the following week the Queen entertained the president of the United States. An example of multiculturalism in action, Barack Obama has found an Irish great-great-great-great-grandmother from the slopes of the Slieve Bloom mountains. The locals greeted him with wild delight, as others have done for the forty seven US presidents with Irish ancestors. It was a great month for him and what a tribute to family historians.
Profile

Omar bin Musa
Interview by Hannah Terry-Whyte, Policy Officer, FECCA

The more avenues people can get freedom and dignity from, the better. I think poetry and music are a potent way of doing that. Through the arts, people can speak for themselves, rather than having other people speak about them all the time.— Omar bin Musa

Omar bin Musa is a poet, rapper, and hip hop artist who hails from Queanbeyan, Australia. His dedication to and talent for writing and performing have won him numerous awards for poetry and music, including the British Council’s Realise Your Dream Award in 2007 and the Australian Poetry Slam in 2008. He released his first hip hop record, The Massive EP, in 2009, and his first full-length album, World Goes To Pieces, in 2010. He has presented at writers festivals in Bali, Singapore, and Sydney, toured in Germany and Indonesia, run creative workshops in Aboriginal communities, worked as an actor for the Bell Shakespeare Company, and published his first book of poetry, The Clocks, in 2009.

In light of his Malaysian-Australian heritage, Omar and his myriad successes are an inspiration to culturally and linguistically diverse youth in Australia. At the same time, Omar is an inspiration to anyone, regardless of background, culture, or gender, who dreams not only of finding their passion in life but of finding themselves in their passion.

FECCA caught up with Omar several weeks after he performed in FECCA’s Advancing Multiculturalism hip hop video (available on the FECCA website), and posed the following questions to him.

FECCA: What drew you into poetry and hip hop? Who are your inspirations?

Omar: I’ve always loved poetry, and from a young age my parents encouraged me to write poetry and read books. It was a way of expressing myself. In Australia, though, many people have lost the love of poetry, and it’s no longer a part of the fabric of our society. When I was younger, I was writing poetry but it seemed like no one wanted to listen. When I came across hip hop, I immediately knew it was the kind of poetry that I wanted to make; it’s direct, accessible, and unpretentious.

People come to hip hop for a variety of reasons. For me, I went from poetry to hip hop, then in a roundabout way got into poetry slams, and now I oscillate between small poetry shows and big hip hop shows.

In terms of inspiration, I love a wide range of poets and hip hop artists. I’m drawn to poetry that conveys strong, raw emotions through powerful and interesting imagery; W.H. Auden, for example, or Robert Browning. On the other side of the coin, I’m just as inspired by artists such as Andre 3000 and Tupac. Across different genres, what inspires me is people who really care about language and conveying a message in a powerful way.

FECCA: Do you write for yourself, or as a reaction to what you see in the world around you?

Omar: Both, really. You can’t help but be affected by what goes on around you in the world. A lot of the best writing is a reaction, not necessarily to current events in a big political way, but to things that happen in everyday life. At the same time, I do write for myself, as a way of figuring out my place in this topsy-turvy world.
FECCA: How do art and culture interact, in your perspective?

Omar: Every healthy culture has a healthy arts scene, and healthy cultures are often pluralistic, as ours is in Australia. I like that there are so many different influences in our country, from Europe and the Pacific Islands to Asia and the Middle East and so on. This adds richness to our society. The way that it all interplays, though, is hard to figure out. I have an ethnic, cultural background, and I’m proud of that background, but I don’t feel like I have to write about political, ethnic, or socially conscious issues all the time. It’s my right to write about parties or about finding love if I want to, just like anyone else, and that’s a political statement in itself.

At the same time, as shown when I contributed to FECCA’s Advancing Multiculturalism hip hop video, it’s important to speak out about negative trends in our society. For example, with the current anti-multiculturalism trend, which is often a code word for anti-Islamic or anti-refugee, it’s important to stand up and be counted.

FECCA: Have your experiences growing up as a Malaysian-Australian influenced your writing?

Omar: Of course. You can only write about what you know, and what I know is growing up as a Malaysian-Australian in a small town. I think that growing up between the east and west, between the religious and secular, between country and city, has meant that I’ve always enjoyed taking influences from different parts of the world and combining them into something new.

Another aspect to these influences is that when you grow up between cultures, you can assume a hybrid identity. It can be quite dislocating, but it doesn’t have to be negative. Having a hybrid identity can be enriching.

FECCA: You’ve worked in Australia, London, and America, and have toured in lots of other countries as well. Do you think that culture and multiculturalism affect your work differently depending on where you are?

Omar: I’ll answer this one in a roundabout way. In my work, I can only talk of my own personal experience, which is a very particular one. Wherever I am in the world, these are the stories that people find interesting, and writing and performing is a way of forging a connection between people regardless of background. This is why I like collaborating with people from different places. We all have exciting, enriching, and different accents and stories, and yet the struggles and emotions that we’re portraying are the same. In Australia, Germany, America, Indonesia, Japan, everywhere I’ve been, our stories are the same. We all write and talk of joy, of family trouble, of searching for atonement or trying to find love. This is what we all experience as human beings, no matter where we are or where we’re from. We simply express ourselves in different ways and with different voices.

FECCA: What do you think are the key issues facing CALD youth today?

Omar: I can only speak as an artist, but I think that people of diverse cultural backgrounds, particularly from Asia or Africa or the Middle East, often feel dislocated and need to be empowered in some way. Art and creative expression are a really good way to do that. We don’t want, here in Australia, to believe that the only way people can express themselves is by kicking a football around. The more avenues people can get freedom and dignity from, the better. I think poetry and music are a potent way of doing that. Through the arts, people can speak for themselves, rather than having other people speak about them all the time.

FECCA: Do you have a clear goal for your poetry and hip hop?

Omar: At its essence, making music and writing poetry is a very joyous thing to do, and I get complete and utter satisfaction from it. I’m blessed to be able to do it, and the writing and creating is a goal in itself. It’s a way for me to find my place in the world and make sense of the world.

In terms of longer-term goals, I’m working on a new project, MoneyKat, with a Californian hip hop artist where we’re trying to create something new that shows the global side to hip hop. After touring Indonesia together, we started thinking about how hip hop is a global movement that manifests in almost every country. Our ultimate goal is to depict what this global hip hop phenomenon looks like; we’re striving to show that when people from different backgrounds come together to share stories, what we see and find is a common humanity and means of empowerment. To tell our stories and tell them well, to bring dignity to people who often feel disillusioned or dislocated, that’s one of the driving forces behind my work. You know, what I also want is that a guy called Omar bin Musa in 2011 is seen as just as Australian as anyone else, and that there’s nothing odd about him getting on stage and telling a story.
Community safety action guides

Do you know what to do?

Pictorial action guides have been developed for culturally and linguistically diverse communities to help them understand the risks associated with natural hazards that may occur in Australia.

The pictorial action guides each depict a different hazard and show good and bad actions relevant to each hazard.

They aim to help culturally and linguistically diverse communities build an understanding of what could happen and how best to be prepared to minimise any adverse effects. Emergency phone numbers are provided on each. The guides are available on the Emergency Management in Australia website, [www.ema.gov.au](http://www.ema.gov.au).

Storm Flood Earthquake Cyclone Lightning Heatwave

Project Red

The Centre for Multicultural Youth conducted a consultation with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds to discuss emergency management volunteering – their awareness and understanding of the roles, interest in, barriers to and opportunities for active participation.


For further information email: communities@ag.gov.au.
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FECCA is the national peak body representing Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. We provide advocacy, develop policy and promote issues on behalf of our constituency to government and the broader community. FECCA supports multiculturalism, community harmony, social justice and the rejection of all forms of discrimination and racism.

FECCA's membership comprises state, territory and regional multicultural and ethnic councils. FECCA has an elected executive committee and a professional national secretariat implementing policies and work programs on behalf of its membership and stakeholders.

For more information you can read about FECCA’s policies and programs at our website www.fecca.org.au
Information about Human Services Portfolio payments and services for students is now a mouse click away.

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