

Multicultural Western Australia



Office of Multicultural Interests
Government of Western Australia

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Ishar Project unites Young Women under one Banner

A banner marking completion of an innovative project which has enabled young women from diverse backgrounds to play a more active role in their communities was launched on the 18 August 2007.

The *Getting Connected* school holiday program involved 20 young women aged 13-17 years from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and had a three-pronged approach including education, recreation and visual arts activities. The expressive visual component resulted in the creation of a vibrant *Getting Connected* banner.

Minister for Multicultural Interests and Citizenship, the Hon Ljiljana Ravlich MLC, congratulated the Ishar Multicultural Women's Health Centre, Mirrabooka, for initiating the project.

'Young women from migrant and refugee backgrounds often struggle with adjusting to life in Australia. This excellent initiative has provided an opportunity to develop life skills, gain confidence, broaden their network of influence, and gain access to information and opportunities within the broader community', Minister Ravlich said.

'The program has not only benefited the young women themselves but also families and their communities, and I am delighted that a support group will ensure that participants receive ongoing encouragement and build on what they have learned'.

Getting Connected was funded by the State Government's Inclusion and Integration Grants Program (IIGP) which is administered by OMI.

The grants support community organisations in implementing new initiatives, or building on existing ones, that promote integration, inclusion and active participation of people from diverse backgrounds in all walks of life.

Refugees from Sudan Determined to Succeed!

The Department of Education and Training's Employment Directions Network (EDN) is playing a valuable role assisting migrants and refugees entering the workforce. Jackson Duku, a refugee from Sudan, decided to register with the EDN in Fremantle in late November 2005 after one of his friends found work through the program.



'At this stage I was almost completely demoralised', Jackson said. 'I had managed to get work as a truck driver, but I could only get short-term jobs. I really wanted some stable, full-time employment, and I was particularly interested in the mining industry'.

EDN staff assisted Jackson in writing applications to mining companies and worked with him on his short and long term career goals. Jackson attended two Mining Career workshops run by the EDN which provided information on taking advantage of skills shortages in the mining and engineering fields. An advertisement for an entry-level position on a mine site provided the opportunity Jackson was looking for and he secured one of the jobs.

'I was very pleased!' Jackson said. 'However, it was still a difficult process. The induction and initial training was hard because English is not my first language, it is my third language! But I kept trying. Even when I failed a test, I worked hard and re-sat it. I kept going until I passed'.

EDN staff commended Jackson's determination and general approach, 'This is a really positive story, and just goes to show what can be achieved with the right attitude, and support customised to the needs of the individual'.

'I am very happy with what I've achieved and with the support given to me by the Employment Directions Network staff', Jackson said. 'I now have a job with Oxiana Golden Grove Pty Ltd. I am an underground truck driver and construction worker in Kalgoorlie. Best of all, I provide an example to the African community here in Western Australia, of what can be achieved with the right approach and with the right support. It is hard to get what you wish, but it is not impossible'!

For more information on the career services provided by the Employment Directions Network, please contact the Career Development Services Branch, Department of Education and Training, on (08) 9264 5925.

Inclusion and Integration Grants Program (IIGP) Second Round 2007/08

The IIGP Second Round is providing one-off grant funding to community based and non-Government organisations to undertake programs that promote interaction and communication among different religious and ethnic groups from new and emerging communities, and both established communities and the broader community. The Projects will be implemented between January and December 2008.

The Minister for Multicultural Interests and Citizenship, Hon Ljiljana Ravlich MLC, has announced the following five organisations as the successful recipients.

1. Community First Inc

The **Bilyidar Celebrating Diversity** project will bring together 40 young people, aged between 15 – 21 years, from the Filipino, Sudanese and Nyoongar communities; who live in the Local Government Areas of Mandurah, Murray and Waroona to engage in several project activities to develop an understanding of different cultures and address racism in the Peel region.

2. Bunbury Community & Child Care Association (Milligan House) Inc

The **Harmony - Let it be** project aims to break down barriers based on fears, misconceptions and misunderstandings of different religions and cultural traditions and practices; increase integration of diverse groups into the broader community; and build respect and appreciation of diversity among the 50 participants, who live within the Greater Bunbury area. The participants will be members of the Catholic Church, Anglican Church, the Buddhist Centre, the Baha'i Centre, and Islamic Associations.

3. Learning Centre Link

The **Linking Communities** project will involve employment of a part-time Cultural Access Worker by Learning Centre Link to work with six Learning Centres over a 10 month period to enhance the connections and interaction between Centres, new and emerging communities, and Culturally and

Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) groups through various project activities. The project has the potential to involve about 380 people.

4. Community Vision Inc

The **Tales of Times Past** project will provide an opportunity for a group of seniors, in the City of Joondalup, from different religious and cultural backgrounds, to come together to recall and develop personal recollections on a diversity of themes. The aim will be to present these stories at six primary and secondary schools, as well as to community organisations. It is anticipated that a large number of people, from different generations, will be involved and connected through this project.

5. Edmund Rice Centre

The **Harmony Weekend** project will comprise two Harmony Weekend Camp experiences for 80 people from CaLD, Anglo-Australian, and Indigenous backgrounds. Participants will be members of the El Fan Iraqi Community, the Sudanese, Buddhist, and Baha'i communities, and the Edmund Rice Network. The family oriented camps will give participants, from a variety of cultures and faiths, the opportunity to interact, share experiences, beliefs and values, and learn from each other. It is envisaged that the project will serve as a catalyst for further formal and informal interaction between participants.

MEET CAROLINE GOPALKRISHNAN THEATRE ARTIST

Caroline Gopalkrishnan has been an educator, researcher and playwright for 20 years and her latest play *Flatland* written in partnership with Shirley Van Sanden was presented at the Blue Room Theatre in Northbridge between 18 September – 6 October 2007.

Gopalkrishnan was born in Penang, Malaysia, has Chinese/ Indian ancestry and grew up in Sweden. Gopalkrishnan completed a PhD in 2007 through the University of Canberra on the issues of race, ethnicity and gender in Australian tertiary education.



A scene from the Play Flatland

Flatland is about a disparate group of people living in a small block of flats, each oblivious to the other's life histories and secrets; isolated, alienated by their fear of "the other".

The play explores the question - 'Just because a majority may agree on something does that necessarily make it right'?

Gopalkrishnan says 'Theatre, it has been a huge personal learning curve to explore the concept of social justice with others in the community, through my teaching and the medium of theatre and performance. The concept of "difference" is extraordinary in its capacity to change its colours according to what is happening in the world at large. I have used theatre and performance to invite others on a collective journey of understanding the world and our place in it. Performance textured by sound, visual movement and actors elicit feelings from the audience in a very different way to any other medium'.



Caroline Gopalkrishnan

DOCEP Migrant Workers Project

The Labour Relations Division of the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection (DOCEP) as part of its objective to make Western Australian workplaces fair, safe and more productive has begun a new initiative to inform migrant workers of their employment rights. The target group is the new and emerging communities and new arrivals in Western Australia, as they are recognised as being particularly vulnerable and open to exploitation because of their lack of understanding of employment laws and obligations.

Allan Adams has been appointed to work on the migrant workers' project. He has been working with the Office of Multicultural Interests, migrant resource centres and other agencies to identify target groups and issues affecting employment.

Allan has delivered a number of presentations to CaLD communities. The presentations are of a conversational nature that allows participants to ask questions and tell their stories.

The topics covered in presentations include types of employment (full time, part time and casual) and leave entitlements (annual, sick, long service, carer's, parental and bereavement leave) plus other employment issues.

The information is seen as vital to this sector of the community as it empowers them to make informed decisions with regard to employment issues.

"Not Drowning, Waving"

The Minister for Multicultural Interests and Citizenship, the Hon Ljiljana Ravlich MLC, recently endorsed and approved the circulation of a CaLD youth Discussion Paper entitled *"Not Drowning, Waving: Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) Young People at Risk in Western Australia"* (CYPAR).

The purpose of the Discussion Paper prepared by the Office of Multicultural Interests is to raise awareness of the issues faced by young people from CaLD backgrounds. OMI is also seeking feedback from Government and non-Government agencies in relation to the key strategies that could be investigated further by the State Government to address the issues highlighted.

The Discussion Paper is divided into the key areas of home, community, sport and recreation, health, compulsory education, post-compulsory education and employment. It draws on local, national and international research, as well as local consultations with relevant stakeholders including CaLD young people. Some of the suggested strategies included in the Discussion Paper have also been put forward by young people consulted in the number of studies. It also includes some of the key Government initiatives that are currently in place.

Copies of the Discussion Paper have been provided to relevant Ministers, State and Federal Government agencies, Local Government Authorities and non-Government organisations. For hard copies of the Discussion paper, please contact OMI on (08) 9222 8800.

Where concerns about employment rights and/or entitlements are identified, one-on-one appointments can be made with Allan to discuss them further. In some instances and with the participant's permission, this information is passed to the Fair Employment Advocate (FEA) for further investigation. The FEA has recently been appointed by the State Government to investigate unfair, inappropriate, and exploitative work practices; whether these are related to dismissals, pay and conditions, discrimination, bullying and harassment or other matters.

The migrant workers' project has been very well received by the migrant communities, with ongoing requests for information sessions to be held at community-organised workshops.

For further information contact Allan Adams on (08) 9222 7700.

Sharing Cultures: Kellerberrin at the Heart of Cultural Exchange

The Community Arts Network of WA (CAN WA) opened the doors to its Indigenous Arts and Cultural Development Unit in Kellerberrin in July 2006. This was a great achievement after two years of establishing partnerships and seeking resources.

Eight months later, on 29 March 2007, CAN WA hosted a cultural exchange, bringing together Noongar Aboriginal people and the Narasirato Pan Pipers of the Solomon Islands in an exchange of traditional music, dance and shared experiences of their connection to the land.

Under the watchful eyes of experienced community artist, Peter Keelan, the Narasirato Pan Pipers conducted workshops and performances and gained a deeper understanding of local Indigenous culture culminating in a community banquet celebration.

The exchange was a great success for all involved - Kellerberrin District High School students, local Noongar elders, two Indigenous dance groups, local Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members, CAN WA LiveworX Training Program participants and the Narasirato Pan Pipers - with students from Curtin University Film and Television documenting this amazing journey.



Narasirato Pan Pipers dance workshop with Kellerberrin District High School.
Photo - Masaki Fukuda.



Caption: Louise Ford with one of the *Connections* volunteer mentors, Dina Aobiola.

Community Relations Integration Officer (CRIO) Program

The Office of Multicultural Interests funds the Community Relations Integration Officer (CRIO) Program which aims to build the capacity of communities to identify and find solutions to their needs. Seven non-Government agencies have been funded to raise awareness and link members of new and emerging communities with the range of services and programs available to them.

Gosnells Women's Health Service; The Gowrie; Mission Australia; The Coalition for Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Detainees Inc.; Ethnic Disability Advocacy Centre; Muslim Women's Support Centre; and Brockman House have all received 12 months funding to employ CRIOs.

Connections Project:

Mission Australia's CRIO project is called the *Connections Project* and links in with the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Programme at Mirrabooka to provide further support to their students and the broader humanitarian migrant community.

Mission Australia's *Connections Project* Coordinator is Louise Ford.

Mission Australia Mirrabooka is now inviting interested individuals to become a Mentor as part of the *Connections Project*.

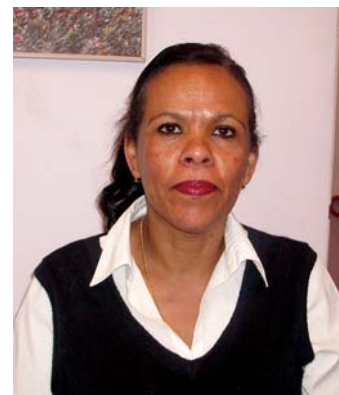
The *Connections Project* is intended to help people in your community to effectively use services that are available for them. If people are not using some services we would like to learn why, so we can tell the service provider what the problem is. This will help those services to respond to the needs of members of the community for that particular service, which will be a very good thing for your community and for those services.

As a Mentor you will meet people, attend meetings, learn new skills, work closely with the Connections Coordinator and start to get to know people in different organisations.

You will encourage other people in your community to become mentors too, so more people can learn about services they can use and how to use them.

If you are interested in becoming a Mentor or for further information contact Louise on telephone (08) 9207 3221.

New World, New Dreams!



Mary Woldemichael left Ethiopia and came to Australia in 2003. Having arrived in Perth without a job, Mary approached the Employment Directions Network Centre, Centrecare, as a humanitarian client.

'I remember their advice being immediately helpful, and I followed their recommendation to enrol in English classes at TAFE', she said. 'I'm happy to say I completed my Certificate III in spoken and written English'.

Employment Directions Network Centrecare staff advised Mary she was eligible for the services of the *Profit from Experience* Program. This Program is funded by the Western Australian Department of Education and Training, and it aims to improve career development opportunities for mature aged people across the State. The program assists people aged 40 years and over, and for Indigenous clients 35 years or over, to gain career development skills.

'The staff at the Employment Directions Network Centre helped me to take the next step', Mary explained. 'I was provided with assistance through the *Profit from Experience* Program to undertake a Certificate III in Aged Care. Again, I'm happy to say, I finished the course and gained the qualification'.

Staff at the Employment Directions Network Centre said the *Profit from Experience* program was excellent for clients such as Mary. 'We can provide a range of services to such clients. We offer career guidance and action planning, access to a range of training courses, and we can assist with the recognition of current competencies. A basic aim of the program is to help mature aged people manage the direction of their own careers'.

'I cannot stress how important it was to me to have the help they provided', Mary said. 'Having successfully finished these courses I was referred for job placement. I started my first job, part-time, in an Aged Care facility in Marangaroo. I now work full-time in the Nursing Home, and I'm enjoying it very much'.

'It's difficult arriving in a new country and trying to find work, especially if you need to work hard at learning the language. The Employment Directions Network Centre was very, very helpful in encouraging me on my journey into the workforce. I would recommend their services to any of my friends who were looking to improve their career choices. All they have to do is look at my success to know it works'.

For information on the *Profit from Experience* Program for mature aged people, simply call 13 64 64.

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