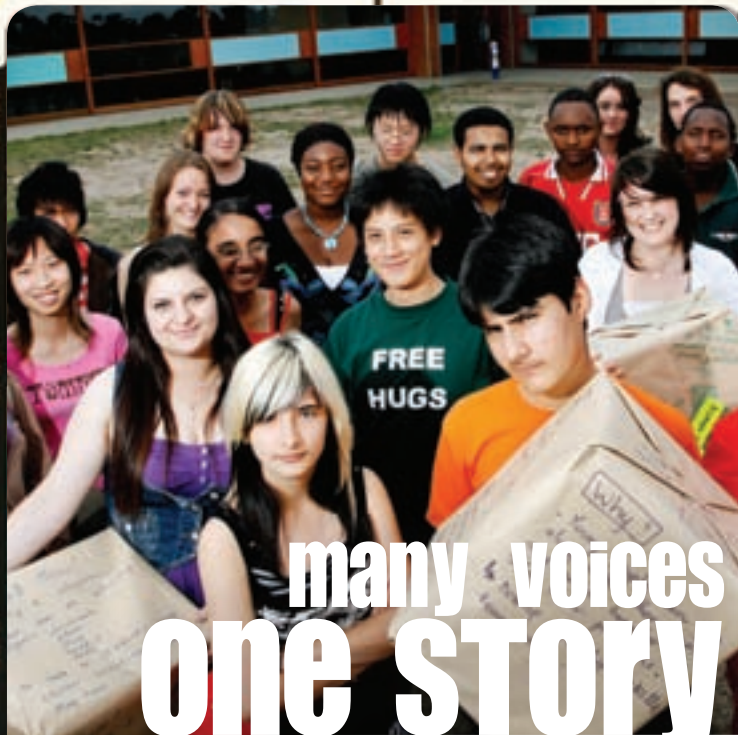
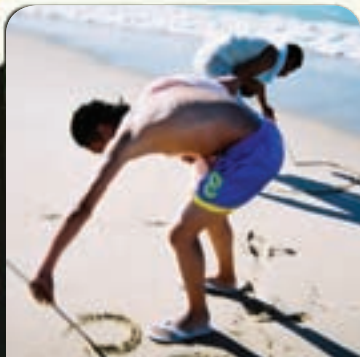


A HISTORY OF THE CENTRE FOR MULTICULTURAL YOUTH



many voices
one story

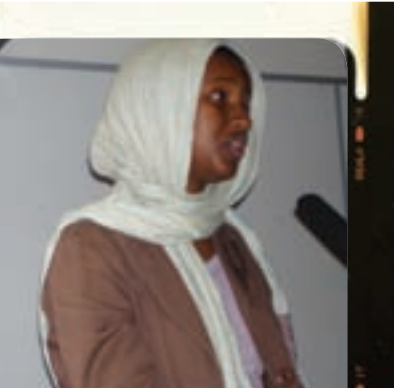


1988-2008
CELEBRATING

20 years

WORKING WITH MULTICULTURAL YOUNG PEOPLE IN VICTORIA

CMY
Centre for Multicultural Youth



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We thank all of our partner organisations and funding bodies who have worked with us over the years, committed staff – both past and present – and all of our supporters. Most of all, we would like to thank the young people and their families who have inspired us and with whom we have worked alongside over the past 20 years.

Project team: Louise Olliff, Sarah Cornfoot, Roz Dermondy, Soo-Lin Quek, Carmel Guerra and Hass Dellal

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welcome

It is my great pleasure to introduce *Many Voices One Story: Celebrating 20 years working with multicultural young people in Victoria.*

This book is a celebration of The Centre for Multicultural Youth's (CMY) 20th anniversary, as well as a celebration of human rights, diversity and the hopes of young people. CMY's journey from its early goal to create a better community for newly arrived young people to its current manifestation as a well-recognised leader in youth issues, is founded on a strong belief that change is possible.

The journey of the past 20 years has taken the organisation through significant changes in Australian multiculturalism. CMY listened to the diversity of voices and opinions, in order to explore what unites young people as a community, not simply what divides us. It has brought together a range of young people's voices to create a vehicle for their concerns to be heard. This is multiculturalism at work. It is a challenge for every

one of us – in cities, in rural and regional towns, in the urban fringes – regardless of who we are and where we have come from, to continually examine how we can generate genuine opportunities for every individual in our community.

Twenty years on from being a seed of an idea, CMY now stands on a firm platform to build on its achievements. As young people often say, it is not just about marginalisation or disadvantage; it is about hope and optimism. On behalf of the Board, I look forward to continuing our work with our partners and young people in the next stage of CMY's journey.

Dr Hass Dellal OAM

Chair, The Centre for Multicultural Youth



“ I would like to congratulate the Centre for Multicultural Youth for reaching this significant milestone of twenty years of operation.

Since its inception, CMY has been a leading organisation in the provision of support, advocacy and services to refugee and migrant youth ... By helping young refugees and migrants access resources and opportunities and encouraging them to remain engaged with their families and communities, CMY plays an important role, not only in supporting some of the most vulnerable members of our community, but in promoting social harmony and inclusiveness in Victoria.

”

John Brumby
Premier of Victoria



introduction

In the mid-1980s, when I graduated from university, the service system in Victoria was very different to what it is today.

There were only a handful of us who recognised the particular needs of migrant and refugee young people and the need to bring their issues to the attention of the broader community. We possessed a strong sense of optimism and belief that we could and would establish a vehicle for ethnic young people's voices and issues.

In the mid-1980s, multiculturalism began to emerge as a framework for public policy and, consequently, so did a growing awareness of issues affecting migrant and refugee communities. We started to establish partnerships and strong links with both the mainstream youth sector and the ethno-specific/multicultural sector to draw attention to issues affecting young people from diverse backgrounds.

We believed that strong partnerships are the key in bringing about change. We were also committed to providing a space in which

young people's voices could be heard. Having young people speak directly to decision makers and service providers gave currency to the issues, and bolstered our confidence to stand up and drive policy. The principle of placing young people at the centre of everything we do has remained unchanged over 20 years.

We are proud of the work we have done, both in Victoria and nationally. We have produced this publication as part of our 20th anniversary celebrations to reflect on the challenges, achievements and lessons learnt along the way. As with many other community organisations, we so often focus on identifying the challenges for young people that we forget the gains made. It's important to recognise how far we have come in 20 years, so that we can dream about what we want to achieve over the coming 20 years.

I would like to thank the many funding bodies who have supported CMY over the 20 years. Special mention must be made of all the staff, past and present, whose tireless commitment has shaped that original idea into what we are today.

Carmel Guerra

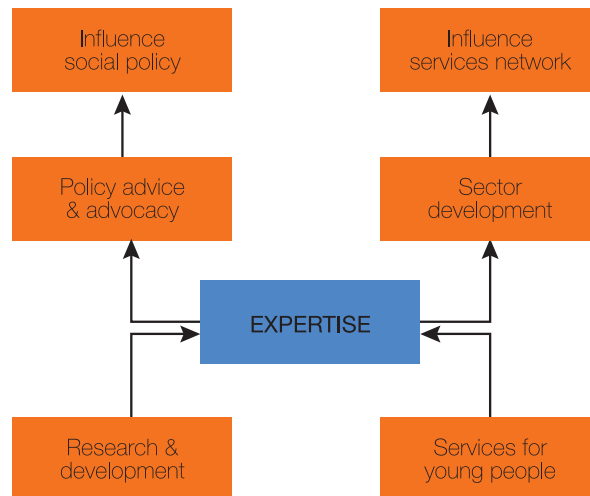
Chief Executive Officer, Centre for Multicultural Youth

ABOUT CMY

CMY was established to influence both the social policy agenda and the service networks to ensure that young people from diverse cultural backgrounds have every opportunity to succeed in Australian society.

CMY operates on the basis of three guiding principles:

**human rights
diversity
participation**



The CMY model is based on four main service dimensions of research and development, services for young people, sector development and policy advice and advocacy. CMY seeks to promote social change by combining policy development and direct service delivery within a community development framework. The service delivery we provide ensures that CMY retains its expertise, and leadership in advocating for young people from culturally diverse backgrounds.



our foundations

.The foundations of diversity

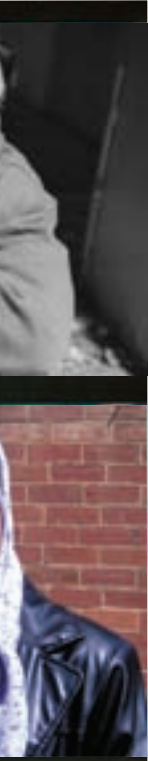
The Centre for Multicultural Youth developed in the context of an Australia with a diversity of cultures, religions and spirituality. This diversity goes back over many thousands of years with the original inhabitants of this land. We acknowledge the traditional owners of this land and their rich cultural heritage and pay our respects to their elders, past and present.

Immigration and settlement services

Immigration to nineteenth century Australia resulted in a diverse population. Assisted passages schemes encouraged free settlers, largely from Britain and Ireland. The Gold Rushes of the 1850s witnessed an influx of Chinese miners, establishing a significant Chinese presence in Australia for the first time. By the turn of the century, a number of other Asian groups, as well as Pacific Islanders were residing in Australia. By 1901, around 23% of the non-Aboriginal population were born overseas. Approximately 57.7% originated from the UK and 21.5% from Ireland. Other birthplace countries of significance included Germany (4.5%), China (3.5%), New Zealand (3%) and Sweden (1.2%).

The *Immigration Restriction Act 1901*, one of the first Acts to be passed by the new Commonwealth of Australia, curtailed this diversity by excluding non-European migrants. By 1947, only 9.8% of the Australian population had been born overseas. The development of the post-World War II immigration program began to reverse this trend as Australia once again began to accept migrants from a wider range of countries. (DIMIA, 2003)





Settlement services available to migrants have evolved over time and in response to the social policies of the time. The following three main policies have had the most significant impact:

- **Assimilation**

The post World War II migration program maintained the 'White Australia Policy' which had been in place since the Immigration Restriction Act 1901. Under this policy, new migrants were expected to learn English, divorce themselves completely from their own culture and be absorbed into the mainstream culture. Most new arrivals received very limited assistance. They had to rely on their own family and social networks to manage the transition into a new country and new culture. By the 1970s, assimilation proved to be an unworkable policy and was finally abandoned.

- **Integration**

The White Australia Policy was finally abolished in 1973. Furthermore, the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* outlawed discrimination based on race or ethnic origin. Migrants were no longer expected to abandon their culture and assimilate. They were expected to integrate into the broader community. There was a growing awareness that settlement was a difficult process. The federal government acknowledged the need to expand language and other support services. Welfare officers were employed and based in migrant hostels. However, on the whole, migrant communities were expected to help their new arrivals.

- **Multiculturalism**

By the late 1970s, the term multiculturalism began to be used more frequently. The Galbally report *Migrant Services and Programs* (1978) reviewed settlement services and recommended a set of actions. The report directed attention to the probability that many services were in practice not accessible to non-English speaking migrants or might be better delivered by ethnic welfare organisations rather than by the unsympathetic or uncomprehending 'mainstream'. The implementation of the recommendations led to further development of settlement services, and funding started to be provided to ethnic communities to establish services to better assist new arrivals.

Carmel Guerra, 1989,
anti-racism campaign



“ Carmel (current CEO, CMY) and I graduated from the Youth Affairs course at Phillip Institute in 1983.

At that time, in the field, there was no recognition of the specific experiences and needs of young people from non-Anglo backgrounds.

There was no recognition of personal or institutional racism as it related to young people. We felt that we needed to get this agenda moving. We joined with other workers, mostly from “ethnic” backgrounds, and formed Workers with Ethnic Young People. ”

Fran Linardi

Original member of WWEYP



1984

Workers with Ethnic Young People (WWEYP) is formed

1987

State Government funds a project worker for WWEYP

1988

State Government funding received to establish an Ethnic Youth Issues Network (EYIN)

Carmel Guerra is employed as the first EYIN Project Officer

1989

Cambodian Lao and Vietnamese (CLV) Youth Accommodation Project commences

THE 1980s

The 1980s was a period of exciting developments as multiculturalism began to take hold in the shaping of the service sector and its responses to migrant and refugee communities.

Public discourse on multiculturalism opened up new ways of dealing with social issues, including service responses, and lack thereof, to migrant and refugee communities. Many organisations that are today seen as integral services for refugee and migrant communities settling in Victoria, emerged during this decade.

It was also a period in which second-generation migrant young people were graduating as professionals in the youth and social work fields. These workers brought with them different perspectives, a passion for change and commitment to improving opportunities for migrant and refugee communities. At the same time, the growing diversity in the general workforce also made its impact in the public service. Policy makers were more willing to listen to diverse perspectives and voices. It was a period of strong community advocacy for refugee and migrant communities. And so, our story begins ...

Seeding an idea

In the early 1980s a group of youth and social workers formed Workers with Ethnic Young People (WWEYP). Many individuals in this group were themselves from migrant backgrounds, and knew from personal experience that refugee and migrant young people had specific needs that were not effectively addressed within the mainstream youth sector nor the ethno-specific sector. The latter catering more for an older age group, with limited understanding of how to create a youth-friendly program. Migrant and refugee young people's issues were therefore not being addressed appropriately or ignored altogether. WWEYP believed that, as a network, they could support each other and effectively advocate for migrant and refugee young people.

In partnership with the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV), the WWEYP received a small grant from state government in 1985 for a worker based at the ECCV. However this funding was short-lived.

“ We wanted to get the ethnic youth agenda onto the mainstream service system. The fear was that the agenda could become marginalised as another ‘ethnic’ issue if it stayed in the ‘ethnic sector’. We already had the support from ethnic communities through the ECCV and made an ideological decision to go with a mainstream agency. ”

Carmel Guerra

Original member of WWEYP and current CMY CEO

As it was an informal network, WWEYP needed an incorporated organisation to provide an auspice in order for them to apply for funding again. There was much discussion on to where to position the WWEYP to get maximum impact for migrant and refugee youth issues.

Together with the ECCV, WWEYP approached the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic), the peak body for the youth sector, to undertake the auspicing role. In November 1987, the Ethnic Youth Issues Network (EYIN) was officially formed as a unit of YACVic. It was a mutually beneficial relationship that supported the development of EYIN for the next thirteen years.

Taking root

Members of the WWEYP continued their involvement through the management committee of the newly formed EYIN. A membership base was developed consisting of community-based organisations concerned with the well-being of young migrants and refugees. Members came from a wide range of work places – locally based youth groups, community agencies, schools, housing groups, ethnic community groups, health and welfare agencies.

The aim of EYIN was to provide support for those working with migrant and refugee young people as there was little or no resources or expertise at that time. The EYIN also had a secondary goal of effecting policy change in the government and non-government sectors to improve responses to this cohort of young people. These two main goals remained consistent and set the foundation for what has now become the Centre for Multicultural Youth.

In 1988, with the support of YACVic, EYIN secured a three-year grant under a joint funding agreement between the state government Youth Affairs Division and the Ethnic Affairs Commission. Carmel Guerra was employed as the first project officer.

“ We got funding for EYIN after meeting with Dimitri Dollis [Ministerial Advisor] and Peter Spyker, who was Ethnic Affairs Minister at the time.

We put a case that there were lots of isolated workers doing ‘youth’ work attached to ethnic organisations and lots of isolated youth workers trying to support new refugee groups, primarily through local governments.

We agreed to provide a secular, more professional service that increased skills, depoliticised ethnic tensions and linked up youth workers. ”

Lesley Podesta

Former YACVic Director





EYIN believes that all social policies, practices and structures should reflect, respond to and be accountable to, the diversity of young people within the Australian community. There should be equal access to and participation in all services, opportunities and life chances and freedom of expression for all people regardless of their class, gender, race, colour, religion, age, sexuality, disability and location. It recognises that, currently such access and participation is not equally available to all and is committed to work for attitudinal and practical changes to achieve outcomes. The particular concern of EYIN is with the experiences of young people of non-English speaking backgrounds.

EYIN, First Mission Statement, 1988

“ The funding applications we used to receive were mainly from elderly ethnic groups for very important social activities. There was a view that young migrant and refugees were ok.

I was delighted when I received a funding application from EYIN for young people. We knew there were young people who were vulnerable and isolated ...

we recognised it was important to provide funding for community workers to work with isolated migrant and refugee youth as part of their settlement in their new country. I am delighted that the funding for EYIN had a positive long term impact. ”

Peter Spyker

Former Victorian Minister for Ethnic Affairs (1982 – 1988)

1990

I Just Move Around and Around launched

Young People, Social Justice and Multiculturalism launched

Young People and Racism report

1991

Culture Jump program begins as a city/country exchange programs

Breaking Barriers launched

Services for CLV homeless young people established

CLV workers' network established

1992

EYIN becomes the Victorian contact point for HREOC National Youth Against Racism campaign, *Different Colours, One People*
Start of HIV and AIDS peer education project

THE 1990s

EYIN hit the ground running with the publication in 1990 of two landmark reports that proved to be innovative and groundbreaking. It was the start of a series of energetic and exciting projects that kept pace with social change over the decade.

EYIN actively put forward issues, supported services across different sectors to improve access for migrant and refugee young people, and conducted research on issues.

It carried out projects that addressed areas neglected by service providers and the community at large, addressed challenging issues such as HIV/AIDS, ran initiatives related to the mental health of refugee young people, unemployment and refugee young women, the participation of ethnic young people in sports, and developed new and innovative strategies to meet the needs and concerns of migrant and refugee young people. It boldly explored and investigated areas largely ignored by others.

Loud and bold: a new voice emerges

The newly formed EYIN was confronted with growing media coverage of racism and, through its links with local youth groups and agencies, it heard about the rise in racist attacks on ethnic young people. It was an issue not just in Victoria but across the country. In 1988, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission conducted the *National Inquiry into Racist Violence* in response to widespread concern of the increase in racist attacks. After the report was released, HREOC conducted a national anti-racism campaign, "*Different Colours One People*". EYIN became the Victorian contact point for the "*Different Colours One People*" campaign.

Below: Dancers from Dehney Park Secondary College
Vietnamese dance group and Just 2 Fresh dance crew



Left: 'Different Colours One People'
Mekbourne launch, August 1992

Right: Refugee students,
Maribyrnong Secondary College, 1992



1993

Taking a Step Towards Employment report launched

Job Placement and Employment Training (JPET) program commences

Given a Chance video screened and launched at the State Film Centre

Conducted *National Forum on Refugee Young People*

1994

Funding received from the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs for a refugee youth policy officer role

EYIN appointed to the Federal Government Settlement Advisory Committee

Education and Training Needs of Refugee Young People report published

EYIN brought together the range of youth groups and community agencies to explore the extent and impact of racism on the lives of young people. It responded to the National Inquiry's call for submissions, using the anecdotes provided by young people and the observations of both mainstream and ethno-specific service providers.

Further investigative research was undertaken by EYIN through a grant from the Committee to Advise the Attorney General on Racial Vilification. With the grant, EYIN conducted a consultation with over 80 young people to seek their views on racism, both as perpetrators and as victims of racism. From this consultation, the report *Racism and Young People* was produced.

The way in which EYIN worked with young people and service providers to respond to an issue, set the template it was to maintain right up to the present day. It held firmly to the belief that responses to issues must be informed by young people's experiences, combined with the observations of service providers from both the mainstream and the ethno-specific/multicultural sectors. It established the tone for strong evidence based advocacy.

“ The discourse at that time positioned young people very passively, through the picket fence analogy of when did they stop being Greek and start being Anglo, and it didn't position them with any voice or agency in that. **But then what happened is a lot of issues were expressed and EYIN caught this wave of articulate angry young people that hadn't previously existed.** ”

Roger Holdsworth
former YACVic Policy Officer



Service providers continued to search for ways to deal with and challenge systemic racism. EYIN found itself in an opportune position to work with them to develop resources and provide support. Out of this process, EYIN compiled the resource, *Young People, Social Justice and Multiculturalism* (1990). It was a landmark publication for its time and the first of its kind in providing a framework for the delivery of services to young people in our multicultural society. It attracted wide interest in the issues for migrant and refugee young people and led to EYIN being asked to conduct workshops and seminars, not only in Victoria, but also in Western Australia and South Australia.

Keeping pace

The first Vietnamese refugees arrived in Australia in 1976, and between 1979 and 1989, 120,000 Cambodian, Lao and Vietnamese (CLV) refugees settled in Australia, including significant numbers of unaccompanied minors. The Vietnamese remain the largest single humanitarian migrant group to settle in Australia, and were a significant challenge to service providers. It was also a time of learning for EYIN on how to support newly arrived communities, while at the same time, raising quite challenging youth issues for those communities.

“ Policy makers within the Department of Immigration started to realise that youth were important, and it became particularly important when we started to bring unattached young people from Vietnam and Cambodia... **...and it became obvious to the Department that having an organisation that focused on multicultural youth issues was an important complement to all the other organisations** which served the culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Whenever I had to write a list of people to consult with the minister, EYIN was always a very important participant. ”

Mike Zafiroopoulos

Former Director, Multicultural Affairs, Department of Immigration

The arrival of the first CLV refugees highlighted the lack of culturally appropriate settlement services particularly for young people. The early work with CLV young people took a strong community development approach. EYIN worked with young people, bi-cultural workers, ethno-specific organisations and mainstream services to identify the issues that young people were facing. Workers from those communities rejected the 'Indochinese' label, as it was a label not of their construction and it did not recognise the ethnic and cultural diversity in each of the three distinct communities. After much discussion, the bi-cultural workers agreed upon the use of CLV (Cambodian, Lao and Vietnamese) as a more respectful and appropriate term.

Through the EYIN statewide network meetings with mainstream and bi-cultural workers, the issue of CLV youth homelessness was identified as a growing concern. It coincided with the release of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission influential report on youth homelessness, 'Our Homeless Children' (1989). As there was no analysis of homelessness amongst refugee young people in the report, EYIN approached the Myer Foundation and received funding to conduct research into CLV youth homelessness. It clearly demonstrated that homelessness for this cohort was largely invisible as they were not the stereotypical image of homeless young people sleeping in the streets. CLV homeless young people were 'couch surfing', moving from house to house, highly transient and in unstable accommodation. To add to their challenges, they were not able to access services to address their situation. It also highlighted that this cohort of refugees had significant numbers of unaccompanied minors – young people settling in Victoria without families.



“ In the 1980s the Vietnamese were the first large group of refugees to settle in Australia. They were often referred to as the “Indochinese” by governmental bodies.

However, some community workers felt the use of the term Indochinese to be incorrect as it refers to Cambodia, Lao and Vietnam (CLV) during French colonialism. They believed the use of the term “CLV” to be more appropriate as it reflects the individual and diverse nature of these three countries. CMY helped to advocate for the use of the term CLV to accurately reflect the independent and diversity of these three countries and their communities in Australia. ”

Naomi Ngo
*Vietnamese Australian
Community Worker*



1995

Ethnic Minority Youth in Australia research report launched

Presented keynote address at the National Summit on Police and NESB Youth Issues

Presented keynote address at the National Youth Coalition on Housing

Presented papers at the National Safer Community Forum, the Statewide Parenting Conference and at the National Criminology Conference on Young Women and Juvenile Justice

Supported Turkish community to establish youth services in Melbourne's North Western suburbs

1996

Faces of Young Australia photo project initiated

Appointed to the Victorian Government Youth Suicide Prevention Task Force and Ministerial Multicultural Health Advisory Council

Ethnic Youth Sports Development Project launched

EYIN holds youth forums for young people from former Yugoslavia, Horn of Africa and Spanish-speaking countries

Previously, it was assumed within mainstream services that ethnic young people came from protective families and did not experience family breakdown. At the same time, ethnic communities considered youth homelessness an unspoken shame. EYIN sought out homeless CLV young people to document their experiences and the causes of their homelessness. The research broadened the public's understanding of youth homelessness.

The research report, *I Just Move Around and Around* (1990) broke new ground. It was a landmark report as the research was the first to raise the existence of youth homelessness in ethnic communities. It proved to be successful in attracting wide media coverage and interest within the youth affairs sector and the broader community.

“ EYIN represented people who weren't represented in any other discussions or forums, at the same time as some of these groups were starting to get pushed up the social policy agenda.

CMY has always been involved in identifying, highlighting and pushing up the policy tree, issues which relate to culturally diverse young people. ”

Irene Verins

Former Chairperson of EYIN

In close partnership with the Myer Foundation, EYIN advocated to state government for funding to implement the recommendations of the research. In an unusual partnership for that time, the state government partnered with the Myer Foundation to jointly fund the implementation stage. The outcomes from this stage saw the establishment of two statewide CLV youth homelessness services for young people, *Breaking Barriers* – a resource kit for housing services and workers with culturally diverse young people, and delivery of training workshops for services in Victoria and interstate.

By the mid 90s, Victoria's intake of humanitarian entrants changed significantly, reflecting changing world events. Young people from Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia and the Horn of Africa were settling in Victoria with little or no support structures in place to assist them.

EYIN brought together community leaders and young people from the various communities to work out ways to support young people. Fortuitously, the federal government recognised the specific resettlement needs of refugee young people which opened up funding opportunities for EYIN. In 1994 EYIN received a three-year grant from the federal Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs to co-ordinate community based support structures for refugee young people, act as a referral and information point, conduct research and develop resources for the youth and multicultural sectors. It also strategically targeted a number of local governments and worked intensively with them to develop culturally responsive youth services.



1997

Understanding the Victorian Education and Training System: a resource guide for newly arrived young people published in English and 10 community languages

Produced resources on working with young people from the Former Yugoslavia, Spanish speaking communities and the Horn of Africa

Appointed to the Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council
CLV Young People Drug and Alcohol Project commenced

1998

EYIN celebrates 10 years of service

Appointed to the Ministerial Committee on Drugs and alcohol
Release of *Sex Living and Dying* resource

Represented on National Police Multicultural Advisory Bureau
Committee on youth police relations

1999

Exhibition at Immigration Museum of the *Faces of Young Australia*, to celebrate the ten-year anniversary of EYIN

Auspicing arrangement move from YACVic to the Australian Multicultural Foundation (AMF)

Ethnic Youth Gangs in Australia: Do they exist? Research report launched

A series of forums were held for young people from Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia to find out what their settlement needs were and to work with them to develop strategies. This was followed up with community engagement with African young people who were at this stage, mainly from the Horn of Africa. Various forums were also held with a range of stakeholders from various organisations to develop statewide approaches for supporting young people.

Mainstream service providers were grappling with understanding the settlement needs of young refugees and limited resources were available to assist them with this understanding. EYIN conducted training workshops across the state and started to compile training resources on the needs of young refugees. *Given a Chance* was a training package which included a specially produced video which told the stories of five young refugees

who had settled in Australia from El Salvador, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Cambodia and Eritrea. It documented their individual stories from the conflict situations in their countries of origin, to their escape and journey to Australia, their challenges in re-settling and their hopes and aspirations. Launched in 1994, it received wide publicity and helped to raise a broader awareness and understanding of young refugees.

CMY continues to deliver high quality professional development to youth and community sectors, government agencies, the education sector, the sports and recreation sector, young people, community leaders and organisations.

Linking people and ideas

The EYIN statewide network meetings were invaluable in providing a space in which issues could be raised and jointly addressed across sectors. These statewide network meetings were a precursor to the Statewide Multicultural Youth Issues Network, which CMY officially launched in 2001, and which today is convened tri-annually for workers from different sectors to come together to discuss issues and advocate for change.

The continuing work of addressing the needs of CLV young people led to agreement to seek funding to employ a CLV community resource worker to support a network of CLV workers. This was realised through funding from state government to work on strategies for improving service responses and to assist CLV communities in addressing issues and accessing mainstream services.

For the first time, a network of bilingual/bi-cultural workers was facilitated to collectively address issues affecting young people in their communities. It also gave voice to the communities to engage directly with the mainstream youth sector on a statewide level. It demonstrated the value in working in partnership with communities, and the invaluable role of bilingual/bi-cultural workers in building a platform for youth issues in their communities.

The EYIN statewide network broadened its focus to a range of other issues that affected ethnic young people in the 1990s. This included police relations with ethnic young people, education and training, young women, second generation young people, HIV/AIDs, sports and recreation, employment and health promotion.

“ The success of the organisation is in being able to read the political environment ...

There is no doubt that CMY has made a significant impact on the future of service delivery for youth because of their work in the policy area. ”

Joe Zaia

*Former Regional Manager,
Department of Immigration*



“ EYIN was rarely considered “the usual suspects” – because the workers did have a background of experience not just a set of opinions, and at most times you were able to assemble a group of young people who weren’t just there as prize exhibits but who you had mentored or assisted to feel confident in what they were saying ... That youth presence and the street cred were very important. ”

Joan Kirner

Premier of Victoria, 1990–1992

Young people find a voice

From its inception, EYIN believed that a platform was needed for migrant and refugee young people to give voice to their own experiences and issues. One of the ways EYIN did this was by supporting grassroots groups such as the Western Young People’s Independent Network (WYPIN). WYPIN was established in 1989 by a group of young people from diverse migrant and refugee backgrounds in the Western suburbs of Melbourne. EYIN worked closely with WYPIN to support young people’s participation and assisted them to obtain funding and grow as an independent youth-led organisation. It has since been run by people under 25 years of age.

According to Rudy Darmawan, one of the founders:

“ WYPIN came from the youth empowerment perspective, and we believed that young people ought to be given a say about how services are run. At the time it was not the modus operandi as there wasn’t any organisations that catered for young people from different cultural backgrounds; to exist under the same umbrella.... I think we’ve proven you can make that work, and EYIN provided practical support when we were getting started.”





In a similar vein, in 1992 EYIN conducted forums for ethnic youth clubs. It provided information and support to young people interested in setting up ethnic youth clubs. It also established a database on ethnic youth clubs to link them with one another.

EYIN worked with young people in a variety of ways to cultivate better understanding and awareness of multiculturalism in the broader community. “Culture Jump” was initiated in 1990 to bring together young people from country Victoria and newly arrived young people from urban centres to have the opportunity to learn about each other and understand different cultures. As with many EYIN initiatives in the 90s, the novel success of it attracted mainstream media coverage.

The mid 1990s saw a vigorous debate on the value of multiculturalism. More than anything else, it highlighted the level of ignorance in relation to migration and the challenges migrants and refugees faced in re-settling into a new country. Together with Rob White, a lecturer in Criminology at Melbourne University, Carmel Guerra, then coordinator of EYIN, co-edited *Ethnic Minority Youth in Australia: Challenges and Myths*. Published in 1995 by the National Clearinghouse for Youth Studies, this book was the first to bring together a wide range of contributions on issues relevant to ethnic minority young people. It revealed a great deal about the way our institutions and structures were dealing with questions of social justice, equity and human rights.

‘The current environment of “tolerance” has at times spawned a mere toleration of young people who may be different from the dominant culture instead of the respect they deserve as a range of individuals who have a rich diversity of life experiences that inform their lives and lifestyles.’

EYIN Annual Report 1997–98

Education and training

The 1990s were also a time of economic recession and high youth unemployment. Much of EYIN's work centred on employment and education issues. Young people and their families hoped to make a better life in their new country and education was a key theme raised time and again.

EYIN in partnership with key organisations and the communities ran a number of initiatives to raise awareness within government and the youth sector of the challenges young people faced in education, training and in finding employment.

Recognising that young women faced greater hurdles, EYIN successfully advocated for funding for the Refugee Young Women and Employment Project. This project ran a series of forums and culminated in the research publication, *Taking a Step Towards Employment: A report examining the situation of unemployed young women from refugee and non-English speaking backgrounds* (1993), produced in partnership with Footscray Youth Housing.

In 1992, EYIN secured funding to work with young refugees in the transition from school to work. The project was conducted in partnership with two English Language Schools in the Western and South Eastern regions. It was a precursor to the Job Placement and Employment Training (JPET) program funded in 1996. As a JPET program, it expanded to three English language schools. EYIN was one of the first community organisations to be co-located and to operate within English Language Schools. The JPET program managed a caseload that provided one to one support for refugee young people, documented case studies and analysed the education and training needs of young refugees.

In the consultations with young people and their families, youth and settlement workers and through the JPET program, EYIN realised that communities had varying levels of understanding or misconceptions about the education system in Victoria.

EYIN worked with young people to compile Victoria's first guide designed for young people and families to help them understand the Victorian education and training system. *Understanding the Victorian Education System: A Guide for Newly Arrived Young People* (1998) provided an overview of the education and training system in Victoria. It was made available in 11 languages and proved to be such a popular resource that an updated re-print was published in 2003.



EYIN was regarded as one of the better managed, genuinely respected organisations that actually delivered services and was well supported by youth workers. In particular, it did a fantastic job raising the profile of the educational and welfare needs of unaccompanied refugee adolescents. In that regard, EYIN was ahead of the policy agenda.

Lesley Podesta

*Former Director, Victorian
Office of Youth Affairs (1992)*



I've seen the changes from when I had to go to a Language Centre in the late 1980s to what it is like now ...

Back then you had nothing; you finished your language centre and then you went to whatever school was closest to your house and it didn't matter if it had the ESL component. A lot of people ended up lost in that system or dropped out ... ”

Marcela Nunez

A Social Worker and former EYIN JPET worker who settled in Australia from Chile in late 1980s, aged 15

Playing for the future

In working extensively with refugee and migrant young people and their communities over the years, a key issue that commonly arises is around access to sport and recreation. Various studies have shown that participation in sport and recreation can have many benefits for young people in terms of physical and mental health. For newly arrived refugee and migrant young people, opportunities to play can have additional benefits in the settlement context. Inclusive sport and recreation programs can provide a site for building trust, can have therapeutic benefits for young people recovering from trauma, and can help to build stronger community connections and social networks.

'Participation in traditional, mainstream Australian sports such as cricket, Australian rules and netball can give in a young person a sense of belonging – of being part of an overall Australian community.'

EYIN, Sport: Creating a Level Playing Field 1998, p. 40

In December 1996, EYIN launched the Ethnic Youth Sports Development Project, funded by Sport and Recreation Victoria. The project worked with state sporting associations and affiliated clubs to promote their sports and developed specific programs for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. It also facilitated training and information sessions for communities on becoming involved in sport, developed partnerships with local government, schools and sports programs providers, and evaluated and documented good practice models.

The project developed a valuable role in promoting social connectedness and has continued in various forms since, and expanded over the years to form a significant part of CMY.

Ethnic youth gangs uproar

From its earliest days, EYIN actively engaged in discussions and initiatives relating to young people, police and justice. It was a constant issue that peaked at various times. EYIN worked with the Victoria Police on many initiatives as well as with the youth and justice sector to improve relations between young people and the police.

In 1993, the notion of ethnic youth gangs featured prominently in media reports. It marked a low point in police-youth relationships. EYIN was concerned that young people were misrepresented yet again in the media and looked for ways to counter the false panic that was starting to emerge.



The exhibition of 'Faces of Young Australia' at the Immigration Museum, 1999



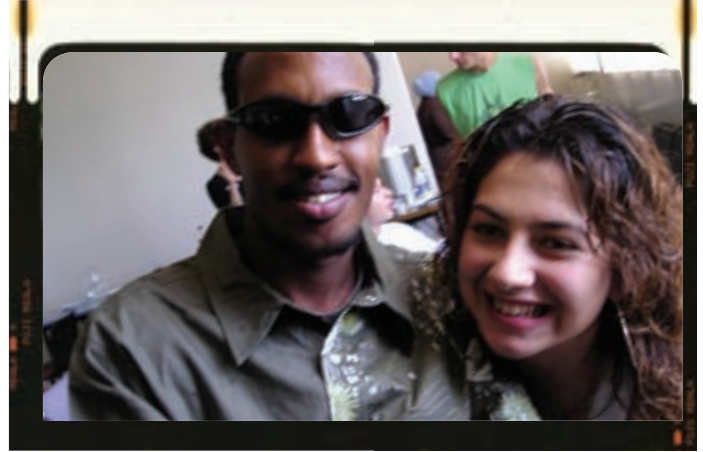
At the time, there was no Australian research available on notions of ethnic youth gangs. With financial support from the Australian Multicultural Foundation and the National Police Ethnic Advisory Bureau, EYIN formed a partnership with Melbourne University, the Australian Institute of Criminology and the Department of Immigration to contribute to a national research project *Ethnic Youth Gangs in Australia – Do they exist?* The research documented extensive interviews with young people from various ethnic groups, detailing their experiences of gangs and police relations. It sought to provide an informed discussion on gangs, to counter stereotypes of ethnic young people and provide a considered response to negative media coverage and public concern. It also provided young people's perspectives and experiences, which are often missing from discussions. The research found that while media and police concern over 'ethnic youth gangs' had appeared to be on the rise, there was little empirical information regarding the activities of ethnic young people.

Celebrating 10 years

The decade ended with echoes of the same challenges EYIN faced at its birth. The challenge to the notion of multiculturalism in the media prompted EYIN to celebrate a decade of service with the photo exhibition "Faces of Young Australia" at the Immigration Museum. Conceived in 1996, this series of photographs aimed to showcase the diversity of lifestyles and culture of young Australians, foster dialogue on issues facing young Australians from migrant and refugee backgrounds, and prompt constructive discussion on all aspects of multiculturalism and its place in the Australian social landscape.

When you're the **minority**
you feel you have to
band together for
self preservation. It's because
everybody shares something. ”

*Vietnamese young person, Ethnic Youth
Gangs in Australia, Do They Exist?
Report no.1 Vietnamese Young People*



EYIN becomes CMYI

After a challenging tendering process, EYIN won the tender for the ethnic youth service in 1999. YACVic, on the other hand, lost its funding and had to close down for a period of time. EYIN did not feel it was able to become an independent organisation yet and had to find an alternative auspice agency. The Australian Multicultural Foundation (AMF) was approached and it agreed to undertake the role. CMY and YACVic continue to enjoy a strong partnership on youth issues, while the move to AMF has strengthened CMY's links with the multicultural sector.

“ When YACVic looked likely to lose its funding and EYIN had attained funding, that put us in the position of making some important decisions about our direction. We decided against going independent at that time, as we were not yet stable and after years of uncertainty we did not have the energy or enthusiasm to manage that transition.

At the time the AMF was a safe haven for us, an organisation that would support us but would allow us to manage our own work and to plan towards becoming an independent organisation.”

Carmel Guerra

Chief Executive Officer, CMY

“ Our society has at times, required great tolerance and understanding when peoples from other lands have chosen to settle in Australia. On other occasions strong actions have been needed to temper intolerance and sadly racist views being expressed against sections of our community ...

The strength of our multicultural society is a reflection of the work of many, and may that work, including that provided by CMY, continue for many years to come.”

Jeff Kennett

Premier of Victoria, 1992–1999



“ The Australian Multicultural Foundation was delighted to undertake the auspice of CMY in 2000.

We saw the value and significance of the work they were doing with young people.

The foundation looks forward to continuing to work with CMY for the benefit all young people.

On behalf of the AMF I wish to congratulate the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) on a remarkable journey over the past 20 years. ”

Sir James Gobbo AC CVO

*Chairman, Australian
Multicultural Foundation*



2000

EYIN re-launches as the Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI)

Reconnect Young Refugees program commences

Landing on Your Feet, a legal information kit for newly arrived young people, published in 12 languages

THE 2000s

EYIN started the millennium with a symbolic change. In 2000, under the auspice of the AMF, the EYIN re-launched itself as the Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI). The new name reflected the growth of the organisation from a 'network' to now becoming a central point of referral, information and research.

The adoption of the word 'multicultural' in its name was in keeping with a broader understanding of migrant and refugees in contemporary Australia. CMYI faced the new millennium with a decade of experience behind it and with strong links and partnerships across Victoria and nationally.

During the new decade, global and national events challenged CMYI to find new ways of making sure that refugee and migrant young people were well represented and, more so than ever, to build new avenues for young people's voices to be heard. The new decade also saw a new pattern whereby newly arrived families were settling in the growth corridors of Melbourne.

CMYI built on its strengths, consolidated its work on a range of issues, strengthened its partnerships. The new partnerships extended into collaborations with academia to progress a research agenda to inform evidence based practice and advocacy.

In the previous decade, in CMYI's former incarnation as EYIN, much of the focus of its work was on building the capacity of the mainstream youth and ethnic sectors in developing good practice in service provision for migrant and refugee young people. It also ensured that a platform was built for young people's voices to be heard. In the new decade, CMYI extended this by nurturing a range of youth participation strategies to increase youth participation. The dynamic youth participation team is now the fastest growing part of CMYI.

2001

CMYI facilitates Multicultural Youth Roundtable for Victorian Office for Youth

CMYI launches *Young Refugees in the Picture Project*, focusing on capacity building in local government areas of high refugee settlement

First Statewide Multicultural Youth Issues Network meeting held

Organised a forum and report on "homework support and tutoring for refugee young people"

Piloted "Young Leaders of Today" leadership program

Supported the establishment of the Settlement Planning committee on refugee youth

Formalised Cross-Cultural training programs delivered to a broad range of agencies including: Vic Police, Health, Housing and Justice agencies and tertiary institutions.

Published *Homeless Twice: exploring resettlement and homelessness for migrant and refugee young people*

Published *Refugee Youth Issues in the Goulburn Valley Region of Victoria*

Presented at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees international conference on refugee settlement, Sweden

Strengthening ties between young people and their families

The start of the new millennium saw the welcome introduction of a service for newly arrived refugee young people that recognised the particular challenges faced by young people and their families settling in Australia. In 2000, CMYI secured funding to deliver Reconnect Young Refugees, a service that provides casework and group activities to support refugee young people (12–18 years) who are at risk of homelessness or have recently left home.

The Reconnect Young Refugees model acknowledges that refugee young people experience homelessness in different ways and face many additional issues in accessing mainstream services. Reconnect Young Refugees supports young people within the family context in a culturally sensitive way, and facilitates family and community connections. The service remains a core part of CMY's Youth Support Team today.

Four years later the federal government launched the first national initiative targeted at newly arrived and refugee young people, the Newly Arrived Youth Support Service (NAYSS). NAYSS provides culturally sensitive support to young people aged 12–21 years who are recently arrived, with services ranging from early intervention, transition into education, training and employment.



“ I applied for the Reconnect position at CMYI in 2000 because I felt the model allowed us to provide families with support that is culturally sensitive and that is driven by the client. ”

Noemi Garcia
CMY Youth Support
Team Coordinator



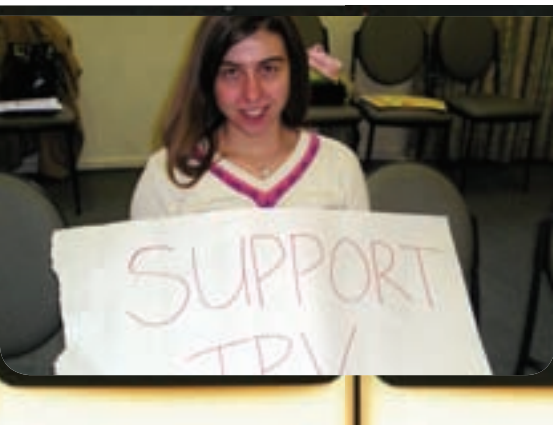
CMYI was a key advisor in the development of this program, and continues to be the NAYSS Lead Provider, providing support and resources to NAYSS services across Australia.

CMYI had been delivering JPET and Reconnect services for some time and expanded its direct service delivery component when it secured the funding for NAYSS. However, a change occurred in the federal government policy on JPET where the JPET initiative lost its ability to provide specialist services and became a mainstream program. CMYI made the decision not to re-tender for the JPET service.

Young Australians speak out

The events of 11 September 2001, gave rise to young Australians of Arab or Muslim backgrounds feeling unsafe or targets of racial and/or religious vilification. It had a widespread impact on the daily lives of Australians of Arab and Muslim backgrounds. While the Government responded to attacks on this group of Australians with calls for harmony, there were increased incidences of vilification and abuse including institutionalised racism by police, security and immigration officials (HREOC 2004). It was compounded by high profile significant events like Tampa and Cronulla. CMYI engaged with youth and mainstream agencies and young people to find ways of countering prejudice and discrimination.

In the context of volatile public debate on asylum seekers in 2002 CMYI released the report *All I ask for is Protection - young people seeking asylum in Australia*. The publication gave voice to young people who spoke about their experiences and hardships in seeking protection and sanctuary in Australia. It was a powerful way of deconstructing the myths surrounding the debate and helped to ground discussions in the reality of young people's lives.



“ **The violent attacks in Sydney this past weekend underline that racial discrimination, which has been rising, is a significant issue in this country.** ”

These events demonstrate that social harmony is fragile and that it needs to be nurtured. Responding to racially based violence can only be tackled by a multifaceted response that engages young people in the discussions and validates their concerns and views.

Carmel Guerra

Director, CMYI, on ABC Radio National 14 December 2005

2002

All I Ask for is Protection: Young people seeking asylum in Australia published

Launch of 2nd edition of *Understanding the Victorian Education System: Guide for newly arrived young people*

Connecting CLD background parents project – researching and piloting models to engage parents in the school systems

Living in Harmony project – involving prominent athletes visiting schools to speak about racism and harmony

2003

Commencement of *Youth Referral and Independent Person Program* pilot to for the provision of Independent Persons to Under 18s in police interviews

Launch of the *Wealth of All Nations* report

CMY and the Institute of Social Research (ISR) at Swinburne University marked UNHCR World Refugee Day by hosting the Young Refugees: Where to Now Forum

Organised a “Race Day Event” in collaboration with the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV) focusing on identity, access to space and racism through the use of theatre, music, and dance

Publication of *Educational Support Issues for Refugee & Newly Arrived Young People*

CMYI continued to speak out against racism and unhelpful stereotypes of migrant and refugee young people. Amid public concern and media coverage of the Cronulla riots, CMYI communicated widely through the media.

Speaking out helped to counter some of the stereotypes. But it wasn't enough. In its own experience, CMYI knew that it had to do more to assist young people in speaking up for themselves in the context of debates on migration at this time. CMYI was strongly reminded of this again with the murder of a young Sudanese man in Melbourne's southeast. It stirred up public debate on the ability of Africans to settle into the Australian community. A rash of negative media portrayals of African young people prompted a group of young people from African backgrounds to approach CMYI seeking assistance. They wanted to tell their story in their own way and not have it told by someone else via the media.

CMYI worked with young people to have their story told and complemented it with a CMYI 'Multicultural Youth Pledge' campaign to counter myths, provide information and get some balance into the discussion about the situation of migrant and refugee young people. The 'Multicultural Youth Pledge' was promoted widely and asked individuals to sign on to a personal pledge to actively counter any negative stereotypes of migrant and refugee young people.

In this period of growing misrepresentation and ignorance about migrant and refugee communities, both government and non-government opportunities for funding opened up for various community participation or social inclusion initiatives.

While the organisation had always been committed to giving young people a voice, the new funding opportunities allowed CMYI to seed and trial new approaches to youth participation. It was a way to also provide young people with a platform to speak out about their circumstances. These new CMYI initiatives caught the attention of young people and through their creativity and energy they grew into a raft of activities.



REALA 15

REALA 16

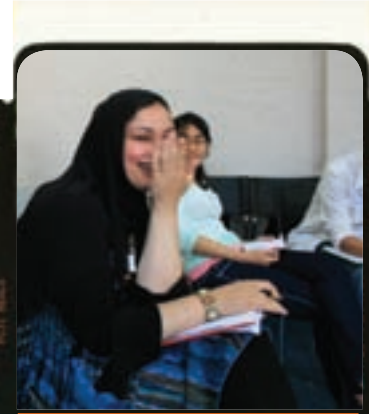
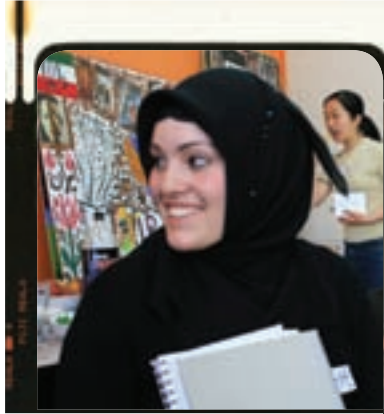
REALA 17



“ I got involved in the multicultural youth pledge because I think people should be more accepting. There’s only one difference and that’s the colour of our skin, and that doesn’t matter. ”

Veronica

*Youth participant,
Youth Pledge Campaign*



The youth participation team is now an integral part of the organisation and has expanded to deliver a wide range of innovative programs – from leadership and mentoring, to arts and environment. These initiatives have given young people the opportunity to speak out about issues affecting them, to have greater levels of participation and to have input at a local and statewide level. More than anything else, it provides various opportunities for young people to take up leadership roles.

The work with young people expanded CMY's multifaith and intercultural focus. It successfully trialed programs that brought together a wide range of young people with a diverse spectrum of faiths and religions. It also built intercultural bridges by bringing together young people regardless of their ethnicities, race or religion. Some of the youth participation initiatives include:

- **Young Leaders of Today**

In partnership with the Red Cross, this school-based program provided training for young people (year 10 level) to gain leadership skills and confidence and to increase their participation in community life, and be heard by government, the community sector, the broader community and by their own communities. After the training program, the youth participants meet with their local council to become familiar with council services and to explore leadership opportunities in their local government area.

- **Short Burst Training**

A youth-led training program for refugee and migrant young people aged 12–25 years to increase their skills in leadership, project management, fundraising and in the media. It is delivered in conjunction with young people as peer facilitators.

“ CMY has been at the forefront of developing and fostering leadership amongst young people.

It is so refreshing to see a new generation of leaders emerging. We sometimes concentrate far too much on the past. Let's look to the future and continue to support CMY so that young people are given every opportunity to reach their leadership aspirations. ”

Hass Dellal

Executive Director, Australian Multicultural Foundation and Chair, CMY Board



2004

Pathways and Pitfalls: Refugee young people in and around the refugee system in Greater Dandenong published in partnership with South East LLEN

Adrift or Afloat? Issues affecting refugee young people who settle without their parents and

Late Arrivals: the needs of refugee young people who resettle in later adolescence report

Refugee Education Partnership Project launched

CMY contributes to the Victorian Settlement Planning Committee's *Good Practice Principles for Working with Young Refugees* publication

• Multicultural Multifaith Youth Mentoring

In partnership with the Victorian Multicultural Commission, RMIT and Victoria University, this innovative group mentoring program brings mentors from the corporate, community, faith and government sectors together with diverse young people to explore a range of topics including civic engagement, sustainability, media and communication.

• Multicultural Leaders in Sustainability (MLS)

MLS was delivered in partnership with Environment Victoria (EV) to train young people to take a leadership role in delivering community education programs focused on sustainable living. From the initial training, the youth participants have now developed a range of sustainability projects including a program for chronically ill young people, a community waste education program in the City of

“ Project R.A.C.E. is a program that didn't shy away from going beyond and above the “norm”. It's hard enough to get any sensible person on a stage to perform stand-up comedy, but the young people in the group had such a passion for tackling discrimination and racism that they found the inner strength to give it a go and communicate to a whole new audience – and they did something that amazed everyone. ”

Mohammed El-leissy

Project Officer - Project R.A.C.E.

Greater Dandenong, a transport challenge for international students and a Chinese household sustainability project.

• Project R.A.C.E.

In partnership with Youthislaw, this innovative program was developed by a group of young people concerned about addressing issues of racism and discrimination. It involves the training of young people in performance and comedic skills leading up to a comedy performance aimed at challenging discrimination and promoting religious and cultural understanding. Graduates of the program have performed in schools and workplaces, and have had successful shows at the Melbourne Fringe Festival.

• Connecting to HomeLands

In partnership with the Community Development Network, City of Melbourne and Latrobe University, this internet-television program provides young people from refugee backgrounds the opportunity to learn to use digital technology to connect them to their homelands and separated communities. It helps young people to communicate and re-engage with their home communities overseas.

• CMY Youth Participation Register

CMY is regularly contacted by government and non-government sectors for information or advice. The register was established for young people (16 – 25 years) who are interested in getting involved in these consultations.

2005

CMYI becomes the Lead Provider for NAYSS

CMYI launches its guiding principles – human rights, diversity and participation

Multicultural Youth Mentoring project launches

African Youth and Family Project launched in Dandenong region

Appointed to the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Victorian Communities

• Statewide Multicultural Youth Issues Network

The Statewide Network provides a regular forum for young people to meet and share information and identify issues of concern. It also provides the opportunity for young people to network with other young people and workers in the government and non-government sectors.

Building on our strengths *Wealth of All Nations*

CMYI's extensive history of working with refugee young people gave it a wealth of experience and understanding of their settlement needs. In recognition of this expertise, in 1997, the National Youth Affairs Research Scheme commissioned the Centre for Youth Affairs Research and Development (RMIT) and CMY (then the EYIN) to undertake a study to identify

“ One of the most impressive things I've seen in the last couple of years I've been back in the community sector was the event CMYI held in 2007 where the young people ran the day, and they were just outstanding. ”

Joan Kirner

Premier of Victoria, 1990–1992

strategies to enable young refugees to make a successful transition to independence in their new country. The study was published in 2002 and remains a valuable resource in understanding the needs of refugee young people.

Youth Referral and Independent Person Program

With an over-representation of young people in the criminal justice system and increasing numbers of newly arrived and refugee young people coming to the attention of police, CMYI and partner organisations secured funding in 2003 for a pilot project to coordinate and train volunteers as Independent Persons to attend police interviews with young people under 18.

“ The needs of young refugees are diverse, complex, and significant, and they tend to be compounded if support for their transition into the community is inadequate or begins to break down. Young refugees are more likely to suffer considerable socioeconomic disadvantage in the short term ... At the same time, the resilience of young refugees and their commitment to Australia and making the best of their new lives must be emphasised. The CMY has had a strong principled view on this, which has underpinned the good working relationship we have had over the years. ”

David McKenzie

Associate Professor, Social Research Centre, Swinburne University



The Youth Referral and Independent Person Program (YRIPP) is the product of a longstanding collaboration between many government and non-government agencies. It builds on CMY's previous work on improving relations between the police and young people.

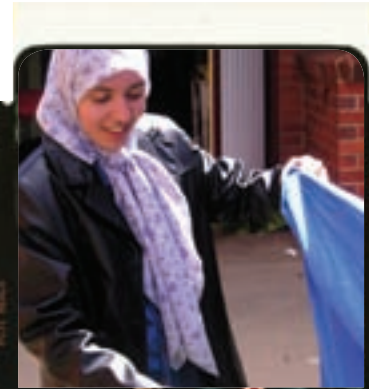
The collaboration consisted of CMYI, the Federation of Community Legal Centres, YACVic, Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service and the Victoria Police. In addition, the Department of Justice (state government) and the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (federal government) were also involved in the planning and development of YRIPP. It was an innovative collaboration as it brought together the youth, multicultural, Indigenous and the legal sectors, and state and federal governments. It also demonstrates that program models can draw on the commonalities shared by all young people as well as catering for their differences.

The program was awarded the Victorian Government's Community Safety and Crime Prevention Award for Enhancing Safety in Indigenous and Diverse Communities (2004). It was expanded from a pilot into a statewide program in 2007.

Out of School Hours Learning Support Program

The education and training needs of newly arrived and refugee young people has been an area CMY has been actively engaged in for a long time. It has developed various initiatives and conducted research over the years. It has also developed information resources for young people (*Guide to understanding the Education System*) as well as for schools (*Opening the School Gate*).





In 2004, CMYI, Foundation House and other partners launched the Refugee Education Partnership Project (REPP). It aimed to establish a more coordinated system across the communities, the education and government sectors to improve the wellbeing and educational outcomes of refugee students. The three focus areas of REPP were: out of school hours learning support programs, refugee support in schools and cross-sectoral coordination and policy analysis.

CMYI contributed to the overall direction of the project and took the lead on developing the out of school hours learning support programs. This component built on CMYI's work with the homework support network group that it convened. The gaps and issues identified through the homework support network helped to shape a proposal to support and resource learning support programs. CMYI successfully secured funding from the state government in 2008 to establish a statewide coordination and support structure for learning support programs, the first of its kind in Australia.



A tribute to John Byrne

In July 2005 John Byrne, a close friend and colleague of CMYI, sadly passed away. John had been the chairperson of EYIN for over 5 years. He was a pioneer in the development of youth services for refugee young people, particularly in Melbourne's western suburbs. John set up the Western Region CLV Young People's Support Group, the Link Program for new arrival refugees at Maribyrnong Secondary College, which is the basis for transition programs for students today. He will be remembered as an important member of the management group of EYIN, and was instrumental in creating CMYI .





2006

Opening the school gate launched

CMYI convenes National Multicultural Youth Advocay Network (NMYAN)

YRIPP pilot project funded for statewide expansion over two years

Settling In: Exploring Good Settlement for Refugee Young People in Australia published

CMYI's JPET services cease in June 2006

What is a Youth Service? A guide for families published in four community languages

Project R.A.C.E. youthled anti-racism project

Arabic Youth in the North project established

CMYI chairs VSPC sub-committee on African Youth Issues

Sharing our learnings

The CMY service model is the first of its kind in Australia. Other states have had some success in establishing a similar model with CMY providing support where it can.

Helena de Anstiss, Director of Multicultural Youth South Australia, explains the benefits from her relationship with CMY and of this national approach:

“ Multicultural Youth South Australia Inc (MYSA) began as a youth network in 1997, became incorporated in 2002, and fell upon very difficult times soon after. In 2004, MYSA's Chairperson and Manager spent two days in Victoria with senior management and staff from Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI) **CMYI provided valuable advice on how to strategically place MYSA in the South Australian context, and the MYSA representatives returned with new ideas and renewed enthusiasm and determination.** MYSA went on to secure core funding, increase its profile, and ramp up its advocacy and direct service delivery work. Four years on, we have 10 staff and two sites ... As we reflect on all that has been achieved in recent years, we are grateful to CMYI for sharing knowledge from their success and taking the “trial and error” out of organisational growth and development. ”

Efforts have been made in the past to establish a national advocacy network but without much success. With the implementation of NAYSS across the country, it allowed for a refugee youth worker in every state and territory. CMYI saw an opportunity to seed a national advocacy structure for refugee and migrant young people.



2007

CMYI launches Multicultural Youth Pledge campaign

CMYI releases national research papers:
Multicultural Youth in Australia: Settlement and transition
and Working with Multicultural Youth: Programs, strategies and future directions

Launch of *Playing for the Future: The role of sport and recreation in supporting refugee young people to settle well* and *Inclusive Local Government Guide*

Multifaith Multicultural Youth Forum and Multifaith Mentoring Project

Multicultural Leaders in Sustainability project with Environment Victoria launched

In 2006, CMYI established the National Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (NMYAN) with representatives from each state and territory. NMYAN builds on existing collaborative relationships between CMYI and other state based agencies. As a network, it has greater capacity to raise the profile of multicultural youth issues on a national level.

Even though the NMYAN is still in its early days, it has submitted responses to key government inquiries and provided information and advice to the federal government. CMYI continues to support its growth and development to create a national voice for migrant and refugee young people.

In 2006 the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) commissioned CMYI to prepare two national papers on multicultural youth issues: *Multicultural Youth in Australia – settlement and transition* and *Working with Multicultural Youth – programs, strategies and future directions*. With the support of the NMYAN, consultations with service providers and young people were held to inform the study. The reports provided an overview of multicultural youth policy in the national arena and detailed best practice programs in each state and territory. Published in 2007, the two papers were widely received and illustrate the value of a national network.

New partnerships Sector capacity building

CMYI's work with mainstream and ethno-specific services to build their capacity to engage with and provide appropriate services for migrant and refugee young people continues to be an important element of our service delivery. A significant part of sector development is the

I first knew of CMYI in my role as Adviser on multicultural affairs during the Kennett Government and have always found them to be sincere in looking after the interests of young people and provided fair and considered criticism.

Nicholas Kotsiras MP
 Shadow Minister for
 Multicultural Affairs &
 Citizenship



2008

CMYI becomes independent and changes its name to Centre for Multicultural Youth

The Out of School Hours Learning Support Program develops resources and receives funding for a pilot in Western region of Melbourne. The program receives further funding for statewide expansion

CMYI expands arts and culture work, including theatre and visual arts projects

Partnership project with Scanlon Foundation on social cohesion commences

strengthening of relationships with federal, state and local governments and to provide strategic advice. CMYI's participation on various committees at the federal and state levels ensured its ability to influence the policy agenda. In particular, CMYI played a key role in the facilitation of the Victorian Settlement Planning Committee that influenced policy responses to newly arrived young people.

The new decade brought new directions in this area of work. The changing pattern of resettlement has seen the growth of newly arrived communities settling in the growth corridors of Melbourne. CMYI recognised the need to work more closely with these local governments and developed new partnerships with them to support service delivery for newly arrived young people. We have established links and relationships with Casey, Whittlesea and Wyndham councils to support the planning and delivery of programs. The resource

Inclusive Local Government - a guide to good practice for engaging young people from refugee and migrant young people in local government was developed and published in 2007.

In recent years CMYI began to explore and extend partnerships into the private sector. Partnership opportunities are strategically pursued to ensure they fit the values and direction of the organisation. The partnership with the Scanlon Foundation is a good illustration of where its goals synchronised with CMYI's direction. The Foundation's principle areas of interest are cultural diversity and social cohesion. It gave CMYI the opportunity to explore innovative approaches to building social cohesion. It has partnered with CMYI to deliver an innovative youth participation program: Voices of Young Australians: Uniting for Social Cohesion. It is a dynamic antidiscrimination leadership training program for young people from diverse (refugee, migrant and Australian born) backgrounds.

Research

CMYI actively forged new links and partnerships with research centres and tertiary institutions in recent years. The new direction in research partnerships is to develop a strong, well recognised research base to inform policy development and advocacy. The strategy has borne fruit with successful funding outcomes through the Australian Research Council Linkage Grant program. Some of our research partners include Deakin University, Latrobe University and Victoria University.



Snapshot of CMY staff September 2008

STANDING ON OUR OWN FEET

After 20 years of development and growth, CMYI made the decision to take the momentous step of becoming an independent organisation. It felt it had reached a stage of maturity and was ready to stand on its own. With the support of the AMF, CMYI undertook the necessary legal steps and became a separate entity with its own Board of Directors. On 1 July 2008, the Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI) officially became the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) signifying its new status.

Twenty years ago, the CMY (then EYIN) started out with one full-time staff member and today it has grown to over 50 staff working across three sites. The initial seed of an idea planted in the late 1980s have flowered into a robust statewide organisation which enjoys national recognition as a leader in refugee and migrant youth issues.

Its story and journey in the last 20 years would not have been possible without the support and commitment of individuals and organisations of which there are too many to mention here. Most of all, it has been the energy and passion of young people that has continued to inspire us. We look forward to working alongside young people to realise their aspirations.

“ In my role as Minister for Sport, Recreation and Youth Affairs and as Minister assisting the Premier on Multicultural Affairs, I have had the privilege to work with CMY on programs and initiatives for CALD young people that span these three distinct, yet equally important portfolio areas.

CMY has been an invaluable support in this work and has worked tirelessly for young people and CALD communities.

May I take this opportunity to extend my warmest congratulations to all involved in CMY for their efforts over the past twenty years. I look forward to working with Carmel and her team into the future. ”

Hon. James Merlino MP

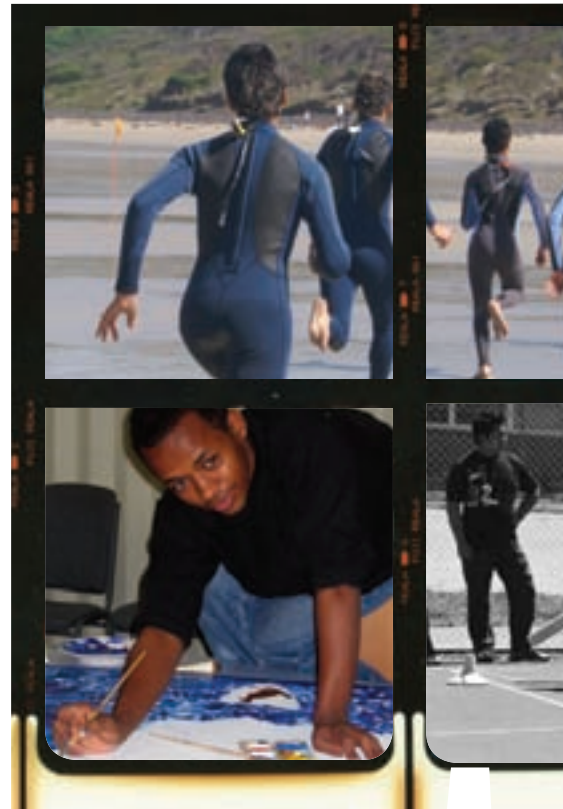
*Minister for Sport, Recreation and Youth Affairs,
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Human rights

Diversity

participation

