



Judith Miralles & Associates

*Planning Research & Training -
Cultural Diversity Experts*



Australian Multicultural Foundation

Step into voluntary work

Program funded by the Victorian Community Support Fund

Step Into Voluntary Work Program – Stage 111

Step into Voluntary Work program has been developed and delivered by the Australian Multicultural Foundation and Judith Miralles and Associates over the past two and a half years in two separate stages.

The first stage delivered accredited training to women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The second stage delivered workshops to volunteer coordinators and managers on recruitment, inclusive training, support and mentoring of volunteers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds as well as strategies to increase the diversity of volunteer program across the organisation. For 2005 the AMF and JM&A will continue to deliver workshops to volunteer coordinators and managers from organisations around Victoria.

Introduction

The 'Step into Voluntary Work' Program was originally developed by the Australian Multicultural Foundation (AMF) and Judith Miralles & Associates (JM&A) and has been delivered throughout Victoria over the past two and a half years. It aimed to address some of the issues that cause an imbalance in the representation of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in the voluntary sector. .

The development of the Step into Voluntary Work Program initially came out of a study into volunteer work that was jointly undertaken by the Victorian Office of Multicultural Affairs (VOMA) and the Australian Multicultural Foundation (AMF) a few years ago. The study found that for many people from diverse cultural and language backgrounds, voluntary work within their own ethnic groups is the first step on the way to broader involvement in the wider community. The AMF and VOMA were also aware that the number of women involved in ethnic organisations either as leaders, as members of committees of management or providing practical support was low. It was also felt that by providing a supportive environment, a course would provide isolated women with the opportunity to meet people, improve their English and build up their confidence, facilitating the transition into volunteer work that they may not have made by themselves.

Proposal for 2005

The Australian Multicultural Foundation (AMF) in partnership with Judith Miralles and Associates (JM&A) is seeking further funding from the Victorian Government Community Support Fund to deliver Stage 3 of the Step into Voluntary Work Program.

The project will involve five key partner organisations.

The aim of this stage of the program is to engage large organisations and give them the knowledge and understanding to commit and to implement organisational change in order to increase the recruitment of volunteers from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

AMF and JM&A will work with key organisations to accomplish these key outcomes:

- To build organisational capacity by developing and implementing strategies to engage people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds as volunteers.
- To increase organisational competencies through training and the creation of policy and planning tools so that long-term benefits are sustainable.

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- To increase a sense of connectedness and belonging of people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- To increase social capital by working with organisations to boost the cultural diversity in the workplace.
- To increase social harmony by greater social interaction of people from diverse language and cultural backgrounds.

Background

Step into Voluntary Work – Stage I (2003)

Judith Miralles, who was involved in the original study, designed a program to meet the needs of these women. Four units of competency from the community services package were delivered through RMIT as a training package on volunteer work within the Australian context. Three of the units included face-to-face training and the fourth unit provided work experience. The program incorporated English language training throughout.

During 2002 and 2003 ten courses were delivered to metropolitan and regional locations. The program has been very successful with 157 students enrolled in the course, with a high completion rate of 81% achieving competency from RMIT University.

Students have rated the course very highly and were pleased with the outcomes, communicating that increased levels of self esteem and understanding of the Australian system meant they could become more involved in volunteering with community organisations. Many of the students expressed a wish to continue study in areas such as aged care, child care and youth welfare programs.

The project also included the delivery of four train-the-trainer programs targeting mainstream volunteer organisations and covering issues of recruitment and promotion, inclusive training and support and mentoring.

The second aspect of the program, train the trainer, became highly respected among voluntary organisations. The AMF was approached by various organisations, such as the Victorian Red Cross, Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres, Volunteering Victoria, Adult Multicultural Education Service and Parks Victoria to deliver the train the trainer course to their staff.

Step into Voluntary Work – Stage II (2004)

During 2004 the stage 2 of the program was funded by the Community Support Fund (Victorian Government).

This stage involved working with five key partner organisations including: Parks Victoria, Red Cross Australia, Victoria, Melbourne Museum, Cancer Victoria and Volunteering Australia. As well as the partner organisations other organisations were invited to attend the workshops. Twelve workshops were conducted throughout Victoria, with 172 people attending from over 80 organisations.

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The program included:

- Review of the organisation's current volunteer program
- Train the trainer workshops for staff
- Mentoring of those involved in the workshops to achieve outcomes identified in the training

The training consisted of:

Train the Trainer Program – 3 Days

The train the trainer was divided into 3-day sessions and allowed work to be completed between sessions. Each course was delivered to on average, 15 staff. The program delivered a total of 12 courses to the identified organisations (see below).

Topics covered included:

Recruitment and Promotion

- How to recruit
- Effective promotion

Inclusive Training

- How to overcome obstacles

Different approaches to communication

- Challenges and benefits of diverse views and values
- The role of English

Support and mentoring

- Fostering connections with other people from a language background other than English, role models buddies etc

Diversity Management

Activities included:

- Research demographics – ABS data, local council data etc
- Development of promotional plan
- Develop training program
- Develop materials, adapt existing materials
- Strategies for a diverse volunteer workforce

Implementation by organisational staff

The staff who completed the train the trainer applied the outcomes identified through the train the trainer workshops. This included the development of partnerships with community organisations, recruitment and retainment of volunteers and other organisational strategies.

Model

Train the Trainer



Red Cross Australia (Victoria)
Parks Victoria
Commonwealth Games M2006
Cancer Association of Victoria
Melbourne Museum
Volunteering Australia/Victoria



Audit process – the program delivery, database establishment, length of stay of volunteers, networks, evaluation of program etc.



Final Evaluation

Outcomes of Stage II

Apart from the skills and knowledge that participants gained from attending the workshops, each participant developed a strategy for their organisation which incorporated either recruitment of volunteers from culturally diverse backgrounds, inclusive training, support and mentoring of volunteers or an organisational approach to increase the diversity of volunteers in their volunteer program. Many of these strategies were implemented.

Some examples of the strategies were:

Cancer Council of Victoria set up a working party across all departments in their organisation and organised an information day to identify community needs. The day was extremely successful with over forty people attending from various ethnic groups, other community organisations and individual volunteers. Ideas and comments from the participants are to be incorporated into the service delivery, policy and planning of the organisation.

The **Melbourne Museum** has been working closely with the Immigration Museum in using their cultural festivals (of which three are held annually) to educate their own volunteers from English speaking backgrounds to learn about other cultures. They have also been linking into ethno-specific Museums volunteer programs to learn more about how to improve their own program and make it more culturally appropriate. This includes the Vietnam Museum at Philip Island and the Chinese Museum at Bendigo.

Volunteering Australia recently helped establish a new Volunteer Resource Centre in the Western suburbs called Volunteer West. They have been using this experience as a case study to identify best practise in identifying and implementing diversity management strategies from the outset. Part of this strategy has been to conduct a demographic analysis of the region and develop culturally sensitive Policy & Procedures, HR & Management initiatives, developing a targeted Recruitment & Retention Program and Training Program.

Step into Voluntary Work Stage III Proposal 2005

Following the success of the 2004 program the Australian Multicultural Foundation and Judith Miralles and Associates have been encouraged to expand the program for another twelve months. We are looking at working with partner organisations to increase organisational and community capacity. To maximise outcomes we propose to target National Heritage, Emergency Services, ethnic communities and health promotion organisations.

The program would be similar for 2005 incorporating:

- Review of the organisations current volunteer program
- Train the trainer workshops for staff
- Mentoring of those involved in the workshops to achieve outcomes identified in the training

Partnerships with Key Organisations

The involvement of the partner organisations would be:

- Recruitment of staff to attend the workshops
- To provide a venue including morning and afternoon tea
- Provide a contact person from the organisation