
Snapshot: Volunteering Victoria Multicultural Volunteering Conference Empowering People, Connecting Communities

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Snapshot by Tess Altman

Keynote Address – Empowering People, Connecting Communities

Dr Irene Bouzo, Executive Officer, Ethnic Communities' Council Victoria

- Introduction and focus. Dr Bouzo acknowledged the traditional owners, the Wurundjeri of the Kulin nation. She said migrants and displaced people helped build this country through their passion for community service, and that the challenge was to tap into that passion. She introduced the ECCV as a peak advocacy organisation aiming to empower, connect, and recognise ethnic groups. The focus of her keynote was helping those who work with diverse cultural groups to know and understand more about them.
- Identity formation. Dr Bouzo introduced a three-step model for positive identity formation: 1. Saying who you are aloud to someone else 2. Feeling good about it, and 3. Making a commitment to it. If one is unable to do these things, it can lead to a repressed identity. It is important to recognise that migrants have multiple homelands, layers of identity and levels of commitment to these identities.
- History of multiculturalism. The 1950s-1970s were the assimilationist years, and immigrants fell victim to assimilationist policies. During the economic boom of the 1950s/60s people did well through niche businesses, but this caused segregation. In the 1970s, migrants voted with their feet for a multicultural policy. Recent research by the Scanlon Foundation shows that over 80% of Australians feel good about multiculturalism.
- 5 legacies of assimilation. There are still assimilationist legacies such as the notion that Australia is a monolingual country; an 'us and them' mentality; the idea of 'making somebody out of nobody' (migrants as blank slates with no prior skills or history); that migrants are only welcome if they fit in; and migrant frustration over changed economic conditions since the boom.
- 9 ways of thinking about adaptation. Dr Bouzo listed 9 ways that migrants approach adapting to a new culture, which are influenced by generational differences between Generation 1 ('inside lookers' who can't give up their own country), 1 and a half ('assimilation experts' who are the most successful assimilaters), Generation 2 ('adapters' who are born here, adaptable across two worlds but don't connect them), and Generation 3 ('world kids', comfortable with transnationalism and globalisation):
 - Assimilationist thinking: Feeling top-down pressure to conform
 - Re-establishment thinking: Keeping busy with adapting and re-establishing (house, job, school etc).
 - Religious, ethnicity and bilingual thinking: Focusing on preserving and maintaining ethnicity, faith and language.
 - Idealised thinking (older generation): Feeling uprooted too fast, having a glorified sense of the past and engaging in backwards benchmarking (everything has to be done the way it was back home).

- Diaspora thinking: Feeling displaced, with multiple homes and a collective memory. The pain of the past can pass through generations, and it's important to give CALD people the space to talk about and reconcile this.
- Transnational thinking: Migration has changed with real-time contact between countries and 'back-home tourism', with 'world kids' having a strong sense of transnational belonging. People are reclaiming languages, learning other languages, and prioritising intercultural skills.
- Community building thinking: For years migrants have participated in local community building through creating urban villages. This has fostered strong internal bonds and weak external bonds. Migrants lose skills to reach out to the general community – groups need to connect and link up with them.
- CALD volunteering. We can learn about CALD barriers and strengths in terms of volunteering through understanding these different ways of adapting. It is hard for migrants to think about assisting the wider community through volunteering, but a lot of informal volunteering happens within CALD communities for cultural maintenance purposes. There is a strong tradition of community building that volunteer advocacy can tap into.
- ECCV volunteers. Dr Bouzo spoke of the history of volunteering at ECCV beginning with Walter Lippmann, an outstanding example of a hardworking migrant. Currently there are a mixture of generations and backgrounds volunteering at ECCV, from a Cypriot baby boomer to a South Sudanese youth. Many international students and refugees are seeking meaningful work and activities, while second or third generation migrants have useful multilingual skills. CALD volunteers have enriched ECCV and Dr Bouzo has learnt about different styles of working with communities at various stages of settlement, especially new and emerging communities.
- Cultural competence checklist. Dr Bouzo went through the ECCV 10 question checklist for organisations wanting to improve their cultural competence:
 1. Have a cultural diversity policy
 2. Employ CALD staff
 3. Run cultural competence training for staff
 4. Get to know diversity resources and your local ethnic organisations
 5. Conduct a cultural self-assessment, identify strategies for improvement
 6. Understand and appreciate the cultural profile of the local community
 7. Make sure employees are encouraged to be flexible and assisted to be culturally sensitive in their approach to the workplace
 8. Get senior management on board
 9. Have a budget for language services and translating/interpreting
 10. Give incentives for embracing diversity.
- Take home message: *Think cultural diversity.*

Panel Session - Connecting Communities to Active Citizenship

- The morning panel was a question and answer session with panelists Dr Rhonda Cumberland (South East Community Links), Helen Kapalos (Victorian Multicultural Commission), Eddie Micallef (Ethnic Communities' Council Victoria), Sarah Nicholson (Centre for Multicultural Youth) and Hong Lim MLA (Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Asia Engagement).
- Key themes that emerged from the questions were:
 - Respecting the unique and informal ways that CALD communities give and contribute
 - Finding an appropriate way to measure CALD volunteering
 - Engaging with, supporting and collaborating with CALD organisations (especially understanding tensions between CALD volunteer involvement in mainstream organisations and CALD organisations losing their volunteers)

- Being sensitive to CALD communities' past experiences and the time it may take for sensitivities between groups to dissipate
- Being aware of CALD barriers into volunteering (e.g. language barriers)
- Recognising generational differences and different methods needed to engage younger potential volunteers
- Engaging established migrants to assist with integrating new and emerging communities
- Acknowledging the Western bias of volunteering definitions and employing the new Australian definition which is broader and more inclusive.
- Take home messages included:
 - Involve young people in organisations
 - People need to get personal benefit from volunteering themselves
 - Involve local government in cultural diversity strategies
 - Recognise that CALD communities can provide guidance, support and help to mainstream organisations in promoting cultural diversity
 - Volunteering is a powerful tool to address all forms of inequality, including CALD community needs and exclusion.
- Some questions asked and panelist responses are included below.

Questions for the Panel:

Active citizenship is defined as people getting involved in their communities at all levels. In the context of CALD communities, what does this look like? (CEO of Volunteering Victoria)

- Active citizenship can mean something different to CALD groups and they need to feel safe and welcomed. There are different forms of giving between CALD groups at different stages of integration (Ms Kapalos, VMC)
- While ABS say CALD communities are less involved, its just more informal. We need culturally appropriate mechanisms to measure involvement (Ms Kapalos)
- The key to building stronger communities is to allow members of communities to participate and develop to their full potential. There are over 200 organisations affiliated with ECCV and a large amount of volunteerism to tap into in specific communities. CALD families can create a pattern for structures to develop in later years (Mr Micallef, ECCV)
- The Youth Settlement Framework focuses on economic, social and civic participation and volunteering fits in all these categories. CALD young people also contribute greatly to regional advisory councils (Ms Nicholson, CMY; Ms Kapalos)
- A key notion we use in service delivery in Dandenong is parallel thinking – there are times where we are one, and there are times when we work in smaller groups and recognise diversity. We shift back and forwards between multiple identities (Dr Cumberland, SECL)
- Active citizenship is important and we need more Asian faces in volunteering. Chinese communities have been here 160 years, and there is a need to embrace and engage with their way of contributing, to ensure security and loyalty. Communities will be responsive. There are paternalistic attitudes in the refugee movement, and there needs to be more engagement with migrants who are already here and have been through the experience (Mr Lim, PS).

Dr Bouzo mentioned that diverse ethnicities bring a glorification of the past into their volunteering that can be difficult to manage. In my experience there is not only glorification but also trauma. Panel, what is your thinking on this? (South East Community Links)

- We need to wait for old sensitivities, especially between ethnic groups, to dissipate with time. We also need to be sensitive to residual racism between new and emerging and established communities. ((Mr Micallef). We need to focus on what we have in common to achieve cohesion (Dr Cumberland).

There are tensions between older and younger generations in terms of where to place their philanthropic energy – CALD organisations are worried about losing their communal volunteers to the mainstream (Jewish Care)

- This is a political issue as many small ethnic organisations don't get government funding so they need volunteers. It is important to recognise the validity of that volunteering and support it through partnership and collaboration (Pino Migliorino, CIRCA). This is also a challenge for volunteer managers who have little scope to engage with diversity because the sector is not supportive (Ms Noble)
- Young people have a lot of strengths they bring to volunteering including a passion for social change. The challenge is to capture that passion (Ms Nicholson)
- An evolving model is needed to mediate the tension between old and new communities. Connecting with young people can look very different as their identities are formed in virtual/visual ways mediated by the internet. The Victorian government has restructured the grants process to accommodate for sensitivities and new ways of thinking (Ms Kapalos)
- Often people involved in an organisation as recipients will come back to volunteer, they want responsibility and to contribute (Dr Cumberland).

Seniors also want to be actively engaged and contribute professionally. When people retire we have no professional work for them – we are wasting a lot of national resources by not involving them.

- We need more skilled volunteering. Let's think if there are particular challenges of tapping into skills in CALD communities (Ms Noble)
- Mainstream seniors organisations such as U3A, Lions, Legacy are wanting to develop connections with CALD communities (Mr Micallef)
- This is an issue of inequality. The groups we are talking about are increasingly excluded. Volunteering should be politicised as it has the power to sustain cohesion and challenge growing inequalities (Dr Cumberland).

Migration is a continuum and until people's fundamental needs are satisfied they won't be ready to volunteer. How do we develop models of volunteering that will attract CALD volunteers? We ask them to fit into Western models of volunteering, so perhaps we need to think more globally and inclusively about how can we engage. Can we tap into and broaden our definition to include community participation, social cohesion, connectedness, informal volunteering? (Cultural Diversity Coordinator, Alfred Health)

- This question outlines the scenery of volunteerism and we may be carrying an inherent bias in our Western, structural response. We need to consider sensitivities, obstacles, how CALD groups might want to engage. A 2006 Volunteering Australia study showed that 72% of CALD groups volunteer informally compared to only 22% in a formal setting. New communities are willing to engage but there are language barriers among others. We as a sector need to challenge and reframe perceptions of volunteering (Ms Kapalos)
- The new definition of volunteering (2016) does include formal/informal volunteering, we are moving toward embracing a broader definition (Ms Noble)
- Volunteering needs to have personal benefit (e.g. CV, social interactions). There are three challenges for CALD youth in particular – personal challenges, family responsibilities, and social challenges (Ms Nicholson)
- Some opportunities include participation committees at hospitals and health centre, ECCV groups calling for volunteers – but people need help to navigate these opportunities and mainstream organisations can be insurmountable. This points to the profound benefits of informal structures as ways to be welcoming and provide support. (Mr Micallef)

Research Roundtable - Same same but different: Growing diversity in volunteering

The research roundtable included presentations from four academics followed by a Q&A session. A summary of each presentation follows.

Volunteering in CALD communities. Dr Christopher Baker, Swinburne University.

- Dr Baker shared the findings from the Giving Australia 2016 mixed methods study (report out later this year), a partnership between the Australian Centre for Philanthropy, the Centre for Social Impact and Swinburne University funded by the Prime Minister's Community Business Partnerships.
- The aim was to map and understand patterns of giving/volunteering in Australia to build capacity and develop/modify policy. Methods included a household survey (6,000 households), two business surveys, a non-profit study (800 non-profits), and qualitative focus groups, including CALD volunteers.
- The CALD focus groups looked at the benefits and challenges of volunteering as well as volunteering infrastructure. The findings relating to challenges were consistent with those in the State of Volunteering Report 2016.
- Key findings were that the currency of new entrants can be thought of as the giving of time, talent and treasure. They have a sense of responsibility to their community. Family and community members influence their giving behaviour and are a gateway into volunteering. Volunteering needs to be presented as a reciprocal exchange that is mutually beneficial and may lead to employment or enjoyment. Many CALD people have a strong sense of connectedness and cohesion and want to give back and contribute to the community. In terms of self-identity, many are driven by their heart and not their head and have a strong personal sense of social injustice – distressing past experiences can be a catalyst for volunteering and motivate people to humanitarian causes. Technology and social media are viewed positively, but CALD groups prefer types such as facebook with low barriers to entry.
- CALD volunteer needs include: Recognition and respect from the government, flexibility, and a national volunteer database for ease of applying. The model to aim for is **EAST – easy, attractive, social, timely**. More coordination and investment in infrastructure can lead to further opportunities for giving.

Volunteering and Civic Participation in the Vietnamese Australian Community. Dr RoseAnne Misajon, Monash University.

- Dr Misajon outlined differences in definitions of volunteering and the need to acknowledge those differences. She gave the example of talking to her Vietnamese Australian participants about the Census and many saying 'I answered no on that [volunteering] question' when they do volunteer.
- Barriers. There are language and culture barriers in the Vietnamese Australian community even after decades, and feelings of exclusion, demonstrated by positioning Australians as 'the other' in conversation. There is also a lack of knowledge about volunteering opportunities. In terms of in- and out-group theory, altruistic behavior is stronger in the in-group. There is a need to encourage identification with a multicultural Australian identity to facilitate altruistic behavior and civic participation.
- Roads into volunteering include religious organisations, and the role of community leaders in encouraging volunteering. Many leaders say 'we owe this country, its time to give back'.
- Future research should look into the role of bonding and bridging capital. Past research has shown in-group informal volunteering encourages civic behaviour and can broaden out to the wider community in subsequent generations.

Volunteering Among Older Immigrants. Betty Haralambous, National Ageing Research Institute.

- Ms Haralambous outlined NARI's focus on mental health, dementia, social connections, and isolation. She introduced her research project enabled by a grant from the Scanlon Foundation and Australian

- Unity to look at older CALD volunteers and the impact of social connections/volunteering on wellbeing. The research uses the cultural exchange model, a common approach of partnering with CALD organisations to enhance services.
- The aim of the research is to document, acknowledge and promote the contribution of older volunteers from CALD backgrounds who are often excluded from research. The research recorded volunteer activities at different organisations (with a formal volunteering focus), explored the barriers and enablers, and developed promotional materials. A survey was conducted and five organisations were interviewed (two ethnicity-specific, one multicultural, one mainstream, one peak).
- Findings were that volunteer activities were mostly similar to general older Australian volunteers, although there were some differences. A key bonus of CALD volunteers is that they understand culture, and can provide information and help organisations build links with CALD communities.
- Two main themes emerged: connecting people to community, and sharing culture through cultural activities. Ms Haralambous gave the example of older Italian volunteers providing mass in an aged care setting, and older Chinese volunteers performing in a dance group. She emphasised the importance of intergenerational interactions and that culture was shared through dance.
- The benefits to organisations of having CALD volunteers include increased cultural awareness among staff, understanding of needs and development of culturally appropriate services, and strengthened links.
- The benefits to volunteers include the satisfaction of making difference in other people's lives, friendship with other volunteers, overcoming social isolation, physical health, personal growth, and imparting age-specific knowledge.
- The challenges for organisations are recruiting and resourcing, the need for a designated volunteer coordinator and how to manage out of pocket expenses.
- The take home message was that older volunteer immigrants play a vital role in supporting their CALD communities.

Multicultural and Indigenous Volunteering Research. Pino Migliorino, CIRCA Research.

- Mr Migliorino acknowledged the Department of Social Services for sponsoring his attendance and gave some personal background about his history of volunteering in the Italian Australian community.
- This research is 'deep diving' into Aboriginal and non-English communities looking at volunteering.
- The main question is: What does volunteering look like in various cultural contexts? We need to understand the specificities of each cultural community. This is important to make volunteering relevant to different CALD communities.
- Cultural maintenance as motivator. When migrants come here, they stop being citizens of countries and start being migrants who want to retain their culture. Cultural maintenance becomes a primary motivator and with this comes a range of responsibilities and obligations.
- Motivators for volunteering are not consistent across all CALD groups and generations. Younger people and refugees volunteer as a pathway to employment.
- There is a very high level of CALD volunteering with their communities and we need to recognise it. Low reported official levels have become a vicious vehicle to say that CALD people haven't integrated. There is much CALD volunteering around cultural practices—religious, social, cultural, food-based, giving back—but little in the generalist community.
- Some barriers include:
 - High level of community need
 - Lack of time, burnout, overload
 - Language proficiency
 - The discriminatory system and infrastructure of volunteering – bias in the requirements and skills needed
 - Lack of cultural awareness in voluntary organisations, causing communication issues

- An area of concern is CALD involvement in emergency volunteering. If national natural disasters occur many won't be informed as there's no platform for information in their language.
- Enablers to CALD volunteering include:
 - Partnerships – talking to people face-to-face, knowing people
 - Options and flexibility
 - Public acknowledgement of CALD volunteering. An example is the small amount of CALD people receiving OAMs each year –because CALD groups do not know systems (lodging forms for nominations etc).
 - Making the system inclusive.

Questions for the panel included:

- How to encourage mainstream organisations to make systems more inclusive
- How to advocate for more funding for volunteer management
- Recommendations for research about returns on investment of volunteering.

Some questions asked and panel responses are included below.

Questions for the Panel:

How can we encourage our aged volunteers with entrenched attitudes and our leaders who would prefer to maintain rather than overhaul the system to make our organisations more inclusive? (Diversity Project Officer, Australian Red Cross)

- There is an inherent conservatism in terms of organisational structure. There's now a political and funding imperative for volunteering. We need to be champions for multicultural volunteering and show the value and imperative for CALD volunteering. Once you unlock multicultural volunteering you unlock multicultural giving and there are many successful migrant populations and entrepreneurs who could be high value donors (Mr Migliorino).
- One of our CALD volunteers just bought paintings at our art show fundraiser – he felt a sense of obligation and we benefited immensely from that (MS Foundation).

You discussed the need for infrastructure, volunteer coordinators, and language resources. I understand the need for coordination and management and we have very diverse volunteers but extra needs take extra resources (e.g. interpreters). We have a creative team but that's not a response to lack of funding. How do we advocate for more funding for volunteer management? (Carringbush Adult Education)

- In terms of research, we need to be more creative about seeking research funding and advocacy. We've identified gaps, and now organisations need to take that forward. In terms of resources and bringing information together, organisations need to have knowledge exchange and work collaboratively in partnerships (local organisations, Migrant Resource Centres) (Ms Haralambous)
- The Giving Australia study and Multicultural Volunteering studies are both funded by the Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership and are giving input about resourcing and policy/practice change at the macro level. At the operational level you need to demonstrate there is return on investment, that volunteer management leads to positive outcomes (Dr Baker)
- Two levels of government (state and federal) are not making a commitment to volunteering and funding is under threat. We have to make a case for the value of volunteering. Volunteering Australia is advocating to DSS for more funding (Ms Noble).

Is there any research flagged about returns on investment in volunteering? (South East Community Links)

- Through the Ministerial Council for Volunteers, Volunteering Victoria is working with the Department of Health and Human Services to develop a State of Volunteering in Victoria report which will look at the social and economic benefits of volunteering. This could also be a topic for further research roundtables (Ms Noble)
- There is research on the positive impact of volunteering on wellbeing and inter-group relationships (Dr Misajon).