

Evaluation of the Refugee Action program (RAP)

APPENDICES

February 2012

BLANK PAGE

SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDES:

Agency staff

1. Can you tell me how long you have been involved in the RAP?
2. What is your current role? Has that role changed in the past 2 years?

If yes, please explain

3. If not RAP coordinator – explore what has been the main role of the RAP coordinator

In the session yesterday, we talked about a number of things that have happened as part of the RAP...

4. Which activities were you directly involved in? Then, what difference (if any) do you think these activities have made for the refugee community?

EXPLORE AND LIST CHANGES

Which of these changes do you think is the most significant?

CAPTURE STORY + WHY SIGNIFICANT

5. Now thinking more broadly, what difference do you think any of the activities/changes/the RAP has had on the coordination of services? (changes noticed in service providers i.e. understanding, access to refugee communities)

EXPLORE AND LIST CHANGES

Which of these changes do you think is the most significant?

CAPTURE STORY + WHY SIGNIFICANT

6. Do you think there has been any shift in culture/practices in terms of working with refugee communities? (PROBE why?, why not?, what?)
7. What do you think has worked well about the RAP approach?
8. What have been the main challenges or constraints? How could things have been done differently to overcome these?
9. What do you think would be the potential impact if the program were to cease?
10. Do you have any further comments?
11. If your story is used in the evaluation summit, would like to check it before it is used? – if Yes how can we best contact you?

Refugee community

1. Determine level of involvement i.e. planning, participant etc
How did you find out about the RAP/activity?
2. What made you decide to participate? – EXPLORE CHALLENGES PRIOR TO INVOLVEMENT IN RAP
3. What do you/did you think about [activity] – PROBE like/dislike/change
4. What difference (if any) has this activity made to you personally? (changes noticed in self)
 - i. EXPLORE AND LIST CHANGES
 - ii. Which of these changes do you think is the most significant?
 - iii. CAPTURE STORY + WHY SIGNIFICANT
5. How supported have you felt/what kind of support have you received?
6. Do you think any of these things have impacted on the way the services are offered to refugee communities? (If yes, how?) OR HOW your community accesses services?
7. What do you think are the main changes that have resulted from this program – i.e. for your community more generally
 - i. EXPLORE AND LIST CHANGES
 - ii. Which of these changes do you think is the most significant?
 - iii. CAPTURE STORY + WHY SIGNIFICANT
8. Do you think any of these things/changes (RAP) we've been talking have helped to better meet your needs as a refugee? EXPLORE HOW/WHY/WHY NOT – refer to Q2
9. Any other comments?
10. If your story is used in the evaluation summit, would like to check it before it is used? – if Yes how can we best contact you?

SIGNIFICANT CHANGE STORIES - SET ONE:

NW2 – Oromo Women’s Group member

The RAP has been good for us to build a strong group. This last time we had a leadership training and that’s helped with leading our group. Before that we have no idea we just come together and we have no idea about running a group but after we did that leadership training we running our group nicely so RAP really helped us. After the training we changed our group leaders, the committee, by holding a meeting a selecting the leaders. I think that’s good because we now we have rules to follow and we have nice communication and nice environment so that leadership training is good for us.

So we’ve done a lot of activities. As long as we get the funds we did a lot of activities. For example, the leadership course and the driving program. So in the driving session CPR and road safety was included and we also used that money for childcare and hiring the rooms for sessions. We also went to parliament house and we saw how the meeting was run and the law of this country and how things are going in parliament house. Everyone was giving their opinion and sometimes they were shouting but in the end they reach an agreement but everyone was giving their opinion and decide with one thing and that I like. We saw how things were done and that in the middle of the table the law of Victoria. We got a CD from there and we can show to our community so they know what parliament is. Everything we have to tell to the members which we didn’t do before. RAP organised a dinner recently in sunshine and met lots of women from different cultures and it’s very good because as women we stay a home at with kids and sometimes we’re busy at home so that opportunity was good for us to meet alot of other people so it’s good to have that kind of things.

It has helped us but not only financially and the workers who are working with us they help us a lot; they give us advice and help with a lot of things. They help us solve the problems as much as they can so we are very confident to work with them and it’s helped this group be stronger. We raise our issues to them and they help us know what things are possible for us and if they don’t know the answer they can contact someone who will. Before we don’t know where to go or how things are done so now we do and we can keep updated with information and that help us a lot. Even this time, the leadership training it help us a lot communicate things and keep the community updated with things and exchanging ideas so I think Kaayyo (Oromo Women's Group) change a lot because of RAP and our future is stronger than before because of the way we are now. Now we have a bank account and a new website and we hope to be registered in the future.

Why is this important?

Specially, if you want to do something you have to have some money to do things but also you have to have someone who is advising you because sometimes we don’t even know where to go and we can ask them [RAP coordinator] and they tell us and we find out the real information in the right time and we’re not wasting our time, we don’t know where to go. So this is a good start for us but before that we don’t even know where we are. They have helped us especially to fill the forms for the community grants or organising for us the membership forms. So things like that; what we have to do and where we have to go. So we got a grant from the Moonee Valley Council to help support our group, especially for childcare cuz when we come together we bring our kids so the childcare is important. For future if things continue for us it’s good because we have to be self sufficient and to make this we need help and ideas. So what is important is we have had a lot of experience. If you give a grant for us it helps us but we really need to appreciate RAP that we have someone who is listening, who is helping us, who is besides us so that is the difference that RAP make for us. We have a lot of confidence now that someone is besides us.

RAP Southern – Lead Agency

I think our RAP model, what has worked well, is the unity of that Steering Committee, I really couldn't say enough about that, it has really been quite significant I think. They have all worked really well together, and I think through that, have a better understanding of working with people from different cultures, and seeing that they have very similar issues and concerns, and barriers that they face, but then through persistence, they can work through them.

We met once a month, and we, they really drove the program, and how we I guess delivered on the work plan, and so they could raise any concerns they had at that meeting, I guess it was a bit of an open forum in a sense, but it was quite structured in what we would talk about, because we still had a program plan that we had to deliver on. Like one of our deliverables, on our work plan, was around providing opportunities for the communities to show case, their communities, and interact with the broader community. So we asked them what they would like to do, how they would like to run this, so I think we ended up doing something for Refugee Week, and they formed a committee, like a sub-committee and worked on this event basically, and so we supported them to do that, and yeah so, I guess each deliverable we would talk about different things.

Why significant?

I think because, I think really the communities aren't given an opportunity to; they are approached by lots of people, but they are never really given the opportunity to let people know what they want, and I think that is because they are constantly being asked by people, oh you know, we think you have this problem, and we know it because we see it on the ground from people coming into our services. Whereas they might think very differently about it, so they don't always get that voice I think. They certainly get listened to, and they are part of consultations, but maybe the very start of that conversation doesn't come from them. So I think you know this program offers them that space to really voice what it is that their concerns are, and the priorities of their community, that aren't always heard. And I guess supported to address those issues, how they see that they would want to address them, which is sometimes very different; and yeah look it is a bit of a juggling act trying to bring in services to support them, but not lose what it is, and how they want to respond to it. But this program certainly gave them the opportunity to do that.

NW2 – Lead Agency

I think RAP does create a bit of a central contact point, because I think a lot of times, services want to access community groups, or specific communities, but there is not, well if you don't have the relationships, with those people, and we know how long it can take to develop some of those relationships, it is really difficult to access groups. So I think definitely, in Flemington, it has created a bit of a hub of activity, and both the Oromo women and Eritrean Youth are very well tapped into now Youth Services Neighbourhood Renewal, the Community Centre, Youth Services in North Melbourne. They boys have started accessing the North Melbourne Recreation Centre, which was pretty inaccessible; we did a lot of negotiation and bargaining to run soccer there. So things like that. I think kind of working with the ones that aren't so accessible. And Vic Police as well, I should say, have been a really key part and they have supported lots of programs, and gotten involved.

So definitely I think it creates a bit of a focal point and contact for services to better tap into communities and to see how they can get involved. And similarly having the network, the Tier 2 network, you know we have had Whittlesea community connections saying we are looking to start up an employment support program, can we come and talk to the group and get some of their ideas, about what would work, and so it kind of creates a bit of a hub; a network people can just immediately tap into, can we just come along and be part of it, or can we come along and share some information. Or, who should we talk to out of the group, so yeah I do think it is that coordination point.

And the partnership approach, I think it is all about collaboration, and even the fact that our RAP region, is a partnership between EMC and Spectrum, I feel that that has actually added stuff. We have two organisations to kind of draw from and connect people into.

Why do you think this is significant?

It has just been so great, I feel like there is a whole team that we have got. That mix of communities and services, and it is all about working together. I feel like we have a little RAP team and even the Tier 2 network, I feel like, it feels much more like colleagues and partners all working together on something, it is not us running the show; we have Jeremiah who is from the Sierra Leone community, but he is also now working at Salvation Army in a community development role. So he is a colleague as well as a representative of the communities and he is involved in the Tier 2 network, and it is really great I think, but it feels much more like it is really a group of colleagues or partners, kind of working on challenges together.

East Gippsland RAP – RAP Partner (DEECD)

The other thing that has come out of the Settlement Committee and is strongly support by the RAP, is a subcommittee that I am most involved with, the Education, Employment and Training Committee. It is really fair to say that RAP has brought a whole lot of groups together, and we have piloted some projects, that have come out of that, and again, it is about partnerships, and seeing a common need, who has got the skills and interest, so we work really strongly with a range of organisations. One program we ran that responded to an identified need was the *Journey to Work* Program. A teacher who is on that group, sort of was saying, there is an issue here in terms of these migrant kids having unreal expectations, and that group of people from that subcommittee included the LLEN (Local Learning and Employment Network).

The *Journey to work* is operated in Navarla College, which is a Catholic College in Traralgon, and Moe, it is operated at Kernig College, so Kernig College is a government school that operates in Churchill and Morwell, it has three campuses, and it has just concluded at Warana College, which is the secondary college in Moe, and the Newborough area. So how the *Journey to Work* operates, they had 12 students, year 7 through to 12, I think, and again I think the numbers go like 8 Sudanese kids, and then 4 Chinese kids, and the purpose is to give them a better understanding of the world of work. But the great thing about that program is that it involves the families, so that a lot of our refugee families and ESL families come in and they want their kids to be doctors, vets and dentists right. And so they come in with unrealistic expectations, and they come in also in a situation, whereas they really don't understand how the system operates.

So I think that the Journey to Work program what it does, these kids visit, a motor car dealership, they went to an Aged Care Centre, they went to a catering organisation, they went to the local Coles, and the idea is, that it is trying to give them an understanding of what qualifications are needed; there is a lot of prep work done before it; and that is at the start of the program with their parents. Because the idea is what you want is also for the parents to learn from what the kids are learning as well. So they go out, they went to the local Police Station, they local, there is a company that manufacturers light aircraft in the middle of the Latrobe Valley, near the Latrobe Valley airport. So they go out there, and they are trying to find out, okay what are the ranges of jobs here, how would you actually get into those positions, what education would you need; what training would you need. But to also understand that if that is where you want to get, there are multiple pathways to get there. So it is probably a program that runs over, and it varies from school to school a bit, but generally 6 – 8 weeks, a really good partnership with a local learning network, the LENS, but a really good whole group partnership. So the school working with the LENS, so in a sense bringing those people together at that subcommittee has generated this program, and it has huge benefits state wide.

Why do you think this is significant?

The good thing that has come out of it, is that it has built that understanding in terms of the employers have all welcomed the kids back, right, so they learnt about the cultures, found out where the kids are from, and had contacts that probably wouldn't have happened otherwise necessarily. And there has been a number, over the three school programs, there has been a number of apprenticeships that have come out of that for the kids. And a number of them, because of the skill sets that they have developed, have actually picked up part time work; so a real community building exercise; really positive. So that is an example and for us it is that coordination and coherence, as I said if there is one thing it is that. And instead of us all sort of swimming across pools in different directions, we are all swimming in the one direction and I think that has been the really important thing.

NW2 – Lead Agency

The Eritrean girls have done a few things, they got very into their events, they have done the IFTA dinners during Ramadan, where they wanted to educate their friends and broader community about why they fast and just demystify it all a little bit for people, as well as celebrating it also themselves with the local community. So they have had two of those and they did that in partnership with some of the young guys. And they have been really successful and I have watched them grow in terms of their organising as well, of the first year compared to the second year, and how much more professional it was, and that extra, I guess having done it the first time, you learn a lot, and really good feedback from the local services and community members who have come along, and just saying, we haven't had this opportunity to do something like this before.

And also from community leaders, I mean some of the older Eritrean community leaders popped by and they came along, and said, oh this is really great what the young people are doing, and to me that was very powerful because, when I had spoken to some of the leaders, all I was hearing, oh the young people, they don't do this, and they are not involved in anything, and so seeing them see the positive stuff; and the fact that they were sharing about their faith and culture through this event, but it was actually the young people reaching out to the broader community through that, I think that sort of spoke quite strongly to some of the community leaders as well. So they have done two of those, and they have already put in a funding application for next year, after RAP finishes, to run it again, so it has become a bit of an annual thing.

Why is this significant?

I guess there is the internal community stuff, and I think some of that challenging, the adults perception that the young people aren't interested in their culture, or their community events. But actually showing yeah, we might be a little bit different, we might have kind of taken on a little bit more Australian culture or whatever, given that we are young, when we were sort of growing up here, but, we can make a really positive contribution, and we do care, and we care about our community, and we care about broader society, and we want to do positive things and make a positive difference.

And then I think also for the broader community, seeing young Muslim women from East Africa that are out there, and are hosting big events and nights and are reaching out to the broader community in that Flemington area; they did talk about the IFTA dinner in terms of wanting to help people understand a bit more, but I think when you look at it on a bigger society level, there are all those misconceptions about women and Islam and what does that mean. So sometimes they are still shy, but getting themselves out there they are ready to get into the local paper, they want to make things happen. There is so much energy and a sense of really belonging in Australia, so I guess kind of showing that to the broader community as well. These young people are exactly the kind of young people we want really everywhere, and making a really positive contribution to their community; they were even short listed for Moonee Valley Youth Awards, and just sort of having that profile as well is really great.

East Gippsland RAP - Partner

So this month we started our men's group if you like, the Men's Shed, and we have got 6 Sudanese men who are coming along, actually there are 8 now, but we have got the 6 Sudanese fellows coming along, and they are working on developing a small woodworking business. One of the gentleman who is coming along is an accomplished upholster and furniture builder, and he was trying to run his business from home, so we have suggested that he uses the Global Studio as his base now, and we have got jobs coming in and we can give him that business skill and mentoring in business. So he is now teaching these other men how to make furniture, so it is really coming together nicely. We have enrolled them all in the certificate of General Education for Adults, and for their white card.

The white card is the construction induction card, it is an accredited course, and you need that to go on site to work in any building, any construction, anywhere, it is a white card in Victoria, it is a blue card in Queensland, so it is for the state. So that is normally a six hour course, but there is no way we would get these gentlemen through that, with their English language skills. One they don't even have the concept of OH & S let alone the words and be able to sit a test, so we are doing this over a 12 week period, and they will leave with their white card; we have got them all overalls, we got them work boots, we have got them hearing protection, dust masks, all that sort of stuff and we have got the equipment, so they are learning. They come to you and they say *'oh yes, I can use this, and I can do that'*. So we have run them through a skills audit, and really they have no idea about power saws, thicknesses and lathes, and things, so step by step, a couple of them have done a little bit of work with real hand tools, a chisel and a hammer, and they are quite good at that, but to be able to go and work for say; Benson Timber and Hardware, or anywhere on site at Loy Yang, or Mecca Homes. They really need to get these skills under their belt.

I recently sent a letter to the RAP Coordinator for some money because we are going to build a range of chook houses, dog kennels, rabbit hutches; we have already got an outlet for the bird houses, she will take as many as we can make. Do you know they sell a bird house for \$100? So, the local nursery will take as many as we can make, because they were importing them from Thailand, and of course Thailand lost all their manufacturing at the moment, and they can't get them for Christmas, so we are down there knocking up bird houses at the moment. So that is an industry, and so we have got a couple of young Sudanese involved in that as well, a couple of young boys, and I have got a volunteer ESL teacher who is coming in now every Monday afternoon for 2 hours, and he delivers English to them. So this is sort of a package deal if you like, and they are making our chairs, they are volunteering for Tri Youth Property Service Division, so they come in and anything that comes in through our door, whether it be fixing a door or we have an order for chairs and tables, these men are working on it. And the difference I have seen, just in a couple of weeks, they turn up now with the overalls, their name tags, and their lunch, and you know, it is really given them a sense of place and purpose.

Why do you think this is significant?

The men, they were suffering more so from the social isolation than the women. The women tended to meet a lot in groups, and take the kids to school, and they had those social connections in the community already, but the men were just sitting at home and weren't doing anything. All of these men are 50 plus, so the long-term prospect of a job in Australia, and in fact some of them are 60 plus with disability. So one man has been shot, and you know, they are never going to get what we call full time meaningful work. So the Global Studio's aim is to help them develop their own long-term meaningful work. They might never become rich through this, but spiritually they have now got a place to call their own, and they are loving it. They have the kitchen and they have their own lockers, and their own workbooks and everything, so they are really enjoying that.

RAP Southern – Lead Agency

The Hazar community identified the need for a driving program. That particular community had previously ran a driving program in conjunction with Aims Education, a couple of years ago, and the community leader saw the establishment the Advisory Committee as being of a real benefit to the program, and so the idea really came from him. The Advisory Committee is made up of a number of different service providers, and together the project worker, the driving project worker, and myself and the community leader as well, kind of threw around some services that would be good to have involved. So we looked at different services who would be relevant and would be able to add some skills and knowledge to that and included in that is a local government rep, and we had, the person who runs the L to P program down in the City of Casey as well; that is a driving program. We have also had Victoria Police involved in that that program and it was also in partnership with Rotary as well; they received some funding from Rotary as well. So Rotarians have been on the driving program, on the Advisory Committee too, which has been a really good link for them, and for Rotary as well, I think there has been some benefits from Rotary too, learning more about the communities that have newly arrived. So there has been that information sharing and exchange.

I know that with the driving program, that especially with the Advisory Committee that has been established, it has assisted with getting to know, not only the different services that are available, but also I guess things that you need to think about when you are running a program. So it is assisting the communities to resource themselves a little bit more, and make more informed choices. Hopefully better choices. So the Advisory Committee was established to add value to the program.

We had a meeting, probably about 3 weeks ago, and there were some really good suggestions, from the Advisory Committee about the program for next year. You know things for the association to consider. Community resources that they could access such as the Traffic Driving School or something that is down in Cranbourne, they would be able to access that, Community resources that they didn't know, that were available. And as a result, I guess, well I am hoping that the model will change, so that people don't actually receive 15 driving lessons, and that is really resource intensive and unsustainable, but they receive a smaller amount of driving lessons, but with more supervised driving.

Why do you think this is significant?

So I think the Advisory Committee has assisted those who are running the driving program, to see and look at all those different options that are available to them, or to the options in accessing a car. Because the program doesn't have its own car, so what are the best options here, what you can go about, how to get donations, if you don't get donations, what is the best option to lease a vehicle, to buy a vehicle, so all those discussions have been taking place.

Shepparton RAP – Lead Agency

One of our biggest successes has been to develop the relationships with the Muslim women in these communities to the point that they would trust us to run health sessions here on a range of very personal health issues. If you'd have said to me two years ago we could do that I would have laughed and said no way we'd get the Iraqi women to come in here and get a presentation from a health professional about their sexual health! And we've run a number of those sessions now!

We did it by finding some champions in the community and our community worker and on-going volunteer, she's a little dynamo; she organises the women. We sat down with her to flesh out the Iraqi community plan and ask *'what are the things that the women are looking for?'* and women's, particularly was what they were looking for. My first thought was that the men will go berserk if we have the women in here talking about reproductive health. But we got a small group of women in including some English speakers and said to them if this is what you want to do, tell us whether it's feasible and if you were going to do this, how would you arrange it? And their advice was sound, which we followed; to sneak up on it slowly, to get the women in for other sessions, like I think the first session here for the Iraqi women was about 15 or 20 came in and had a cup of tea and the first few times it was very much just a social thing. Then we said to one of the women who does a bit of catering, *'we're going to run a lunch for the women, so you cater and we'll pay you'* and that attracted a few more and it was all very social and friendly. So in the midst of all of that we got our female RAP worker to go in and just ask them, just to throw it out there about what are your information needs. A few of them tossed a few things on the table. So the first session we ran for them was around the value of regular PAP smear.

So once we knew what the women wanted we got a few of the men in here and said this is what we want to do, we're not necessarily asking for your approval, but we need to you to go back and let your men know what we're planning on doing and we'd like you to tell them that you're supporting it. So after that, we had a couple of visits from some of the men. They came and inspected the building and wanted to know if there would be any men in the building while this was going on. So we got past that and we did the PAP smear stuff, we did a session on mammograms, we did, and there was about 50 women in the place and it was talking about women's health post child birth. In actual fact they were quite comfortable.

Why do you think this is significant?

It wouldn't have happened if those relationships weren't in place and there was a high level of trust and that's one of the advantages of having a community worker acting as a bridge between you and the community. Also it was about getting important information, and difficult information out to a quite hard to reach group. And that's about understanding cultures and how best to engage with specific communities and that again comes from having some inside information and listening to the community. So, for me that was very significant and something that I wouldn't have thought possible a couple of years ago.

NW2 – Community member - Employment Action Refugee Network (EARN)¹

Where we are now as a group and what we have achieved is empowerment. What used to happen is that we used to be told by service providers, this is the funds, this is what we want you to do, these are the guidelines, this is what we want you to do, for example we are going to have a function for you. That has been changed under the RAP. Now all the groups bring their ideas and we choose the best idea of all of them. Some groups could do unique on their own or some groups could share activities, which was working very well. So as a result of this we become empowered in decision making also participant of the action instead of 'wait and see'.

We also achieved a trusted network. Community organisations we all come up from a different background. To build the trust takes a long time. In this case what we have built, it doesn't matter whether individuals or groups come and go, we have managed to establish a good level of trust in the network and we have also managed to establish trust within the groups themselves. A lot of the groups we didn't know each other before this, but as we saw today, anybody can bring an idea or a program. We have become very familiar with the concept of sharing ideas, be it festivals or activities or projects. Over the last couple of years we have exchanged many good ideas.

At the beginning when we joined the program, we were just a beginner with no direction at all, but as we continue with the program we were actually having a direction and knowing where we are going and now we're at the stage where we know what to do next, and that's a big achievement. So we know have a roadmap. We have managed to lift the community standard. So through this group and with the help of the RAP staff we managed to access opportunities for traineeships , employment opportunities. .

Why do you think this is significant?

In every group and I can speak for my community and others, the biggest problem was most of the time the things that were coming to us were about telling us what to do and often you felt a bit useless as a group and as an individual. Although you can contribute so much but you don't have the chance to do it. The main focus of this group has been to be part of the project and participate in all aspects, from the planning, in the implementation of it, from A to Z the group has been involved. But more than that, the group has been supported, with good guidance, which has empowered us so whenever things go tough we always had a good backup. I can probably say that my community can now sit down and imitate a program without actually any interference from anyone else and then once we agree on something based on our own decision we can then bring it to the EMC to support me along, so that has empowered me to have my own contribution as a community.

¹ allows for members/ leaders across communities to collaborate and discuss and plan initiatives to help address employment issues

SIGNIFICANT CHANGE STORIES - SET TWO:

NW2 – Lead Agency

Really it's been about engaging initially with those communities, developing those relationships with key people from those communities. And then supporting them to identify what are the key priorities, what is happening, what is not happening, what should be happening, and resourcing. For instance with the Oromo women, going '*okay, is there an existing group of women who meet?*'; I wasn't even sure if there was a group as such, or an actual community, but just getting out there and talking to local services, and Councils, and then some of my knowledge; I knew that there were some women around that inner city areas, and some out further, scattered across the north. But eventually realising in Flemington, there was an actual group of women who were meeting, and there was a bit of a history, but they were definitely needing more support. One other settlement worker had helped them for several years, forming a group, but they were kind of at that stage where they really needed more support, and this workers time was quite limited as well, as to what she could do. So that was a bit of a partnership and well in the end, we supported that group together, and then she sort of exited, and said, okay now that you are here, this is a good time for me to pull back, and start with another group.

Yeah so really just getting out and trying to meet people and I think yeah, it takes time, I think that engagement stuff really does take time, and building that trust with people, coming along to celebrations, and with the Oromo women, it was a little bit like that. I was lucky because I could piggy back on there was a group meeting, and there was a worker already engaged with those women, and she could introduce me, so that was much easier. Through that process, that has sort of sparked off a Oromo Young Women's group that I didn't know about, but that was quite a loose, not highly formed. I think having the time for a worker to actually really work alongside them and help them to plan and to look at their group, and to look at what their needs are, and how they could support women, I think that is often what's missing; and having of course brokerage funds that they can identify something, and then they can actually do it, they don't have to wait another year and apply for some government grant. Yeah I think having that time to actually be with a group of women and to plan things and most of those women don't have a lot of English, the literacy stuff is quite hard, so I think for a lot of services, they are not an easy group to kind of access and work with, because it is time intensive. No one has the time to work with a group like that, and I think building the capacity of some of those key women as well, for example they identified leadership training was one of the things they wanted to do as a group. And then supporting them through some leadership challenges to hold elections. So this group, they kind of have and aim that they would like to be incorporated, and they would like to be a formally recognised group, but I think, I guess trying to help them put in the basic systems, and infrastructure, because we have seen that happen with some groups, just registering and getting incorporated, then don't have the systems in place, and don't have a clear structure, and don't realise what they are supposed to be doing, in terms of accountability and reporting, and AGM's and all that sort of stuff

Why is this significant?

I think it gave them a lot more stability, and I think because it started from a very informal group, and the woman that kind of started the group up, I think it was more organic that she and another lady had kind of really run the group. I think sharing the load and seeing that they are a whole group, and that everyone has the ability to kind of input and make decisions on behalf of the group has been really good. I think just helping them take ownership for their group, and what direction they take, and how they work together as a group, and revisiting, I think all the stuff they worked through the leadership training, '*this is who we are, this is what we want to do, and this is how we*

want to interact together’, and I think that kind of gave a very good framework to keep revisiting for them as a group, to keep putting back to them, there is a bit of a structure and a framework.

East Gippsland RAP – RAP Partner (Local Government)

I think it allows better coordination. We have had someone who can actually coordinate programs, coordinate, as I say individual issues that need to be able to be addressed. And the community feels comfortable coming here; So to have a dedicated officer that they know, who they come and speak to, has certainly helped them.

So to be able to I suppose have support for our newest arrivals, I think has been a really important thing for the Council to be able to provide, through the RAP program. Certainly, the coordination is a lot better now, and I think the networking between agencies, is much stronger, and I think the sharing of resources, is certainly much better. Whereas we [Council] might not be able to provide a program, Latrobe Community Health might have some money that collectively; we can do some things together. So I think the level of service is much greater than it has been in the past. Things, the sessions we have provided, sessions around housing, and tenancy agreements, and all that sort of information that we have been able to provide, would have just simply not happened because it doesn’t fit into anybody’s particular program. So I think we have been able to be a little bit more flexible than some of the other agencies, and to respond more so to probably identify needs to have a set program that we need to work with. And if you don’t fit within those guidelines, well it doesn’t happen, Where the RAP program has given them the flexibility to be able to I suppose find those things that have fallen between the cracks or haven’t been offered by other agencies.

I suppose I am also involved in the global studio, and I think, that doesn’t fit into anybody’s particular program, but that has been a great thing, certainly for the women and we are now just working towards getting the men involved in a program, similar program. So I think that is an example where it probably wouldn’t have happened, and RAP has been able to support that by providing some funding for sewing machines and things like that. I see the swimming programs as one of the ones that Latrobe Community Health have been involved in too. So Latrobe Community Health and the RAP Coordinator have coordinated the swimming lessons both here in Moe and in Morwell for community members. We have promoted it and provided the facilities and Latrobe Community Health has been able to provide some of the funding, so that has been a really successful program.

Why do you think this is significant?

Well I think, without RAP, these communities would still be floundering and I think the coordination of services would still be a little bit haphazard. I think we have been able to build really strong relationships with the community, that has been really important, to get their trust and to then be able to engage them, and if we hadn’t had the RAP program, there would be no one who could do that. So I think that is really important and I think that has helped the Settlement committee, to understand better some of the issues. Because we have got those strong links to the community now, so I think while the Police can provide a perspective around policing and education can provide a perspective around education, I think we are able to provide more of a community and holistic view about how the community is travelling as a whole, because we have the RAP Coordinator who is working with them day in day out.

NW2 – Lead Agency

The Eritrean girls did their mother daughter night, which was 'Be Proud of Me Mum'. And that was a number of months preparation; we helped them apply, they applied for some extra funds, they have been very savvy these girls with using their funds to kind of leverage into other funding as well. So we applied through youth foundations, Bendigo Bank and Moonee Valley Fund, and they basically, we linked them into a theatre volunteer, a woman who has a theatre performing arts background.

They workshopped all over summer having these weekly, twice weekly get togethers, with a lot of the young women, and they were workshopping pieces of theatre, of the common interaction between mothers and daughters, and common pieces of conflict. They were writing some songs in different languages, a mix of rap and more traditional sorts of stuff, and they taught their brothers and sisters, like a little children's choir. So they basically developed a whole evening of song, theatre performance, they had a poetry competition to write a poem about their mothers, and they had a winner, and they gave that out to everybody, and yeah basically had a night where they invited all the women from their community to come along to the community centre, and have a free dinner and a night of entertainment.

It was basically about saying we know that our mothers have done so much for us, and we know that sometimes there is this big communication gap, and we don't take the time to thank you and acknowledge the we appreciate what you are doing. And it was very funny, the performances, the people playing the daughter would always speak in English and the girl that would play the mother would always in Tubarii or Amharic or whatever language, and the women were killing themselves laughing throughout the whole thing. I was in the kitchen watching that, and you could see that it was touching and everyone understood, and everyone could also laugh about it; this isn't just our family, obviously this is what is happening with all these families, it is common, just cultural, girls on face book, girls wanting to eat pizza and McDonalds when their mothers want them to eat homemade food all the time. And then I think I mentioned to you, I think the girls saw how powerful it was, and also the fathers were saying, when is our night? When do we get the dad's night? But that sort of led into the girls sort of saying, we do need to connect a bit more with the older generation, and just hear their stories a bit more, and just try and bridge the cultural gap that kind of be there a little bit. And they started visiting the older Eritrean women's group, and just sort of having some luncheons with them, and just starting to talk I think, showing some interest. And I think the older women were also really impressed that these 20 year old girls would be choosing to do this in their spare time and getting funding to have some lunches with them.

Why do you think this is significant?

I think it is really that resourcing, like actually that there is a point of contact, and someone that is there to support them. So when they say we have got this idea, or we want to do this thing, I feel like through RAP, there has been a point of contact, and the resourcing, and they have already got some funding, and we can also help them to see where else they can get funding from, and to support them through the whole process really. So from the start of an idea to helping them plan, *'what do you need to pull off a mother daughter night?', 'Who else can we get involved to help you?'* We can get in volunteers, we can pull in other people, and I think that coordination as well with a lot of youth services and Neighbourhood Renewal, and the Community Centre and there are lots of people out there, and being able to help them develop all those contacts and relationships. A lot of those girls I have seen; two of them are working casually at the Community Centre now. Some of them have volunteered with Neighbourhood Renewal or end up running a stall on the community event. RAP has just provided that resource and momentum, and support that there has been a sort of platform now that they can spring into a whole bunch of things out of the relationships, and the funding I think.

RAP southern – Partner (Local Council)

I think it has been really, personally beneficial, because it gives you that, if you like, a direct line. And you have got; it helps you establish and build those relationships and we, what I have managed, with the RAP Coordinator, is to link them with so many of our departments within the Council, like now with something our Sports and Recreation Department is looking at delivering. So because we have been able to know about these [RAP] projects, and because we have got these relationships, so if there is a project happening or developing, getting off the ground from the Council, you link the two together, and then you have got an easy program transition, and I suppose outcome for both. And particularly like Burundi community have now becoming a star in a sense, because they are participating as one of the key performers at the Merge Festival, we are organising for Refugee Week. And I think council is a partner here to stay, so looking like what we have been talking about, Burundi communities are now so well linked and well known, and I would say well supported through Council

So RAP and the Council we are constantly talking to each other, and we are constantly matching the skills, and opportunity and I suppose for me, when it comes to the funding rounds, and one of the grant's opportunities for communities, it is all about your capacity to deliver the program. So if I have knowledge, and I can support, that application, then that means that the outcome is positive. Sometime if we know that they might need a little bit of help, we can still get the money through, but we just know that they need a little bit more support. And the RAP Coordinator knows how Council works, so she is very in a best position to effectively link them with the appropriate people. Like we organised the cutting grass for the Burmese community when they had a Eid festival a couple of years ago, and I don't think that would happen before, if you hadn't had; would they contact council if they hadn't had that positive link and experience.

Why do you think this is significant?

There is a transparent communication from the workers to everyone, and that means, and I think that is what works best, transparency, so RAP workers informing partners what is happening on the ground, and not just partners, the communities. Informing them, making sure everyone is informed. So the department knows what the communities are doing, and the communities know what the partners do; and then you can look into the synergy where you can match and make those links and connections, I think that that is very important.

RAP Shepparton – Lead Agency

Well the school holidays, we ran trip so the women and the children could go and discover new places; before they just knew Shepparton and home, taking the kids to school, go shopping and that it is, and they could see more, and I think this is very important for people to want to get out, and the more they get out of the home the more the isolation is reduced and they know more.

So initially we asked women where would they like to go, mainly Afghani, Iraqi and Sudanese so we had a mixture, you know all who wanted to go. Yes, so every worker could organise with their own community. The first trip was a snow trip in Mt Buller and this activity was organised by the Philippine community, so what we did, we invited the other communities because they showed a bit of interest, so we hired an extra bus, we had Iraqi's, Afghans and Sudanese, so lots of other people and we helped them to hire the vehicle and ski equipment and stuff like that. So the lunch and everything was organised, and the activity had been run by the bus company for tourist in Shepparton, and so we requested a driver that was a woman as it would be more appropriate for the group.

And then the community representatives said that the women would like to go in the boat, and then we make the suggestion that we all talk and we search the internet and talk to other staff, and we come to the conclusion to have a trip to Sorrento, so catch the ferry from Sorrento to Queenscliff and from there it is very close, and we can spend the afternoon in Geelong, and you can even go in the water, and so that is what happened. And this was the most enjoyable thing was the sandy beach in Geelong, and stuff like that. And then later one woman comes and says I would just like to have a trip back to go into the water, because some women went in the water and it was good, so I suggested Bridgeport. It is small lake, and there are not many people around,; and we discussed the safety issues if something goes wrong and who has the skill to swim or life saving or something like that. And they went to the waterfalls, so when we spoke to the bus company, they make suggestion about how to have the day better organised. So they took them to the waterfall and took them to the area at the lake, and they spend time in the lake. Very enjoyable and in autumn I suggest they go and attend the gallery in Bright, and so it was a full day excursion to look at the leaves and colours something very beautiful and by 2pm and I was there, I just drove myself, and all the woman could go in the playground and it was beautiful, there. Then they asked me, have you heard about Puffing Billy, and I say yes, and they say we would like to go there, so we went to the bus company and we established a contact and so they went and had a ride on the train. And they went to the Zoo, in Melbourne so lots of things

After these trips the women start feeling very interested. So it counts a lot and the woman doesn't want to stay home anymore, and based on that experience and what women go home and tell with excitement, I had a man says to me, can you organise something for us, because we are so jealous, and I say yes, lots of places you can go you know, trips in the snow and that.

Why do you think this is significant?

Well people who have more knowledge just about Australia and then feeling more comfortable and wanting to work and save money, to do this and that, are willing to plan you know. Everything happen during the school holidays, it is more just settling if you feel happy and comfortable, you manage much better your other affairs. So reducing the social solution is the first step to going into the open world to meet other people and other community representatives. They start interacting, Afghani's and Sudanese altogether in the bus, they establish friendships too and lots of activities after that.

NW2 – Lead Agency

Every time Ramadan comes around, the [Eritrean] boys do Ramadan Soccer, and that is in a big tournament where they meet up; it is a social thing as well as the fact that they are eating late, and they have all this energy after dark. And it is a time of celebration as well, so there are a whole lot of reasons that this really works well, and a lot of people always show up. So it is a time for the young Eritrean men to come together and have a big Round Robin tournament, and they have four bunches of teams. They got support from Vic Police in the Flemington area, and the North Melbourne Recreation Centre which is where they had used before.

They are starting to develop really good relationships now, and I guess operating on a more professional level now, which is really good. We set up a meeting with a whole bunch of other services in the area, just to plan for next year, Abdul the leader came along. By the time Ramadan comes around it is July and RAP will be exited by then, and so it was a matter of helping these relationships; we had a really great turnout from other services. So there were youth services and others, and we probably had representation from about 6 or 7 different services that were willing to support these guys, which is a great initiative. And so yeah that was a really positive meeting and Abdul was, really kind of came out of his shell and took the lead on that, and spoke to what was a very formal kind of table, and was really able to present himself confidently, and his initiative, because he knows that it works.

Why do you think this is significant?

He knows that he has a really good model now. And so now that it is booked in advance, and it is all sorted out for the year ahead, which I think shows a lot for their planning, and that base that they have kind of created now. Not to mention the new relationships that they have got from these other services, so I guess that has been a very big change from last year.

RAP Southern – Community Leader

The RAP program was introduced to me when we established the Burmese Australia Society in late 2008. And started early 2009 and began seeking other support and funding opportunities. I met with the RAP coordinators to discuss options and opportunities. The RAP program has been really useful for us in terms of providing capacity building, leadership development and also for learning about other communities like Sudanese or Eritrean. So through the RAP program I got to know these other communities. At the same time, going through the RAP program we have got to know the specific departments like DPCD and FaHCSIA and even at the municipal level and the local level where are the boundaries for example of Dandenong. So this is all a learning process for us.

For this year, with the help of the RAP coordinator we have been talking about the women and leadership development program. So we have been able to submit a grant application to the City of Dandenong to provide leadership opportunities for our ladies. Now we have won the grant.

We run a number of functions, for example Burmese New Year, water safety, traffic rules and this weekend we will be having a end of year BBQ and at the same time running a session about fire safety. So we've been able to apply for funding and been supported through the RAP to hold these events. And also going through the RAP program I've got some funding from DPCD for our sports program, for buying some sports equipment. Two months ago I took 20 youth to the police academy and showed them how they are trained and they learned about what are their rights. Last year was also the first year that we had a *Harmony Soccer Cup*. RAP helped us get some funding to support our communities, not just in the Southeast, but from across Melbourne. The idea was to build harmony and unity among diverse ethnicities from Burma. We need to have collaborative activities together but there is a lot of distrust between the different ethnic groups. So through the sports and cooking together we can learn about other people, and listen to other people and learn empathy. There were 200 players and 700 people in total and it was a big success.

Why do you think this is significant?

Now we are all connected. So we feel that we are now alone and we feel we have resources and information. To a certain level our community has become well informed. We believe that information is power so we need to learn a lot. Even knowing about other ethnic groups within Burma we can educate about ourselves and breakdown centuries of mistrust through activities. At the same time it helps to build a sense of community. Even though we have a diverse ethnicity in Burma we never learn about multiculturalism. So we are educating our young people about respect and also about consideration of others and a celebration of diversity and these are the values that we should maintain in shaping a healthy society.

East Gippsland RAP - Partner

The Global Studio started out as a pilot program at Gipps TAFE in 2009, and with the closure of the fashion department, which was the department I was working in, along with ESL in Gipps TAFE, and we needed to find a new home, so we had 12 women from varying backgrounds. Nearly 50% were Sudanese, and the rest were Bangladeshi, Cambodian Thai, so we had a mix. So we ended up with Try Youth and Community Services who are now our governing RTO. So we needed an RTO to be able to deliver accredited training, vocational training, so we went with Try. So with some funding from the RAP program and Settlement Action Committee, we have brought industrial sewing machines and overlockers, and the rest of the equipment has either been donated or it is owned by myself. So we are fully set up down there now. So yeah we have now got 58 students coming through, and not all of them are migrants of course, probably 50% would be migrants, and we have also got some students who aren't eligible for government funding for any education, but they come along as the wives of some of the local engineers here, who are working on Australian Paper Plant. So for social isolation reasons, they come twice a week and do some English and do some sewing and it is more of a friendship group for them, then study.

Yes I think the beauty of the Global Studio and I know that I push my own barrow, but why not, is that English is our common language, so we all have to speak English to communicate, but it breaks down all those stereotypes in the community when you see Japanese women, and very wealthy Japanese women working with really poor Sudanese women, and you know they are just women, just women, and they work so well together. And the Global Studio is non denominational and that is the problem we had with running anything in a church, you had the newels, not wanting to be with the dunkers, because they were Muslim and they were Catholic and the Global Studio has just eliminated that, we actually talk about everyone's religion, we ask everyone what religion they are, and we observe some of their small religious things, we go oh today is Ramadan and things like that, it is not a taboo, and I think to be like that, and not just a Sudanese program. Because you know, I think, and I maybe wrong, but my gut feeling is, the Sudanese are sick of Sudanese programs.

Why do you think this is significant?

Probably what's significant, is that my original students have gone, they have left me, but you know that is a beautiful thing, they are all doing something else now, Certificate 3 in Aged in Care, Certificate 3 in Child Care; I am still helping them with their homework I might add, but they have moved onto other projects, so it is a pathway, and it is hard to let them go sometimes, but the Global Studio is a pathways, that confidence building and skills building then onto the next thing. One woman is running the Sudanese women's program on local radio, a past student and again it shows that the women who have found their feet or their voice and moved on. They were doing nothing when they first entered the program and they weren't engaged in any formal learning what so ever.

RAP Southern – Lead Agency

What we did was that building the capacity of individuals, and through that of the community groups, just seeing some of the amazing projects unfold and that through Burmese Muslim communities, through Burundi community, through different other Afghan communities, and just see communities working together, the enhanced skills and experience that the community leaders have received. You could see and build the confidence and then see the leaders taking on further studies, and for example; employment opportunities, and see them grow personally, and professionally.

I think that, you can't say, that you have had a direct impact, but I would like to think that there has been some kind of role model encouragement, constant role model and skill development and that kind of facilitation through RAP that has in a way helped them grow as individuals and I think to help the community organise to access resources, to be, I think confident. We have facilitated the building of relationships and I think that is the key factor, or ingredients of our society, how we operate. We operate on our networks, and when you are newly arrived, community, it becomes very difficult and that is what you need to learn and do, shake hand with the decision makers, understand where you can get your resources funding, know how the system works. I think everything that is facilitated through the RAP and the partnership, it builds the leadership capacity. Similar for Burmese community and the Burundi community it is the leadership, it is the strong leadership that gets the community to deliver for the community and support for the communities.

Why do you think this is significant?

The focus was not on individuals, because you do have the settlement and all the other services provided, but it was focusing on the community as a whole, in developing their capacity of leadership. You know the strong leaders, lead the strong communities, and I think one of the best examples I think of, is certainly our Burmese Muslim community, which I think are absolutely thriving around Springvale. For me I always ask why they are so successful, and I think it is because they had a really strong leadership, and then the community role models, and take the lead if you like from their leaders, and I think it is very important to invest in community leaders, or current or the future ones, to develop them, and then you have got multiple kind of benefits and outcomes for the community as a whole. So focus on particular groups was absolutely fantastic.