NON ENGLISH SPEAKING MIGRANTS & COMMUNITY CENTRES

A HANDBOOK
This booklet was prepared for LCSA by John Casey as the Migrant Services Development Officer. LCSA would like to acknowledge the contribution of the following people:

- Angela Tsoukatos for her comments on "A Profile of NES Migrants in Your Area".
- Pedro Gomez for the research on "Translating".
- The LCSA Migrant Services Advisory Committee for their support and advice.
- Maree Gill, Nada Spasojevic, Trish Wright, Judith Hawkes, Maureen Bradshaw, Liz Patching, Rosa Loria, Sonia Sedmak, Martyn Jones, Wendy Bowles, Desmond Crowley, Julie King, Cheryl Kelly and Loukia Zinapolous for their comments on the draft.
- The Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs for the funding for the project.

March 1985

ISBN No 0 949885 12 6

Wordprocessing & proof reading by: Compuskill, Matraville.
phone - (02) 6941033
A community training and computer services project established by Peninsula Community Services Ltd.

Printing by: Crown & Anchor Printery Pty Ltd.
Cartoons by: Alison Weisman
© 1985 Parts of this booklet may be reproduced without prior permission provided the source is acknowledged.

Note: For the sake of brevity and consistency the following terms are used throughout this booklet:
- NES migrant: An immigrant or refugee from a country where English is not a common language. It refers to the first generation of immigrants.
- Community Centres: All Community Aid Centres, Neighbourhood Centres, Community Information Centres etc.
- The Centre: The collective noun for all workers, volunteers, management committee members involved in running a Community Centre.
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTRODUCTION</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND MATERIAL | PAGE
| A History of Migration | 6 |
| The Current Situation | 8 |
| Attitudes to Migration | 10 |
| The Development of Ethnic Specific Services | 12 |
| The Migrant Experience | 14 |
| Why NES Migrants Don't Have Access to Services | 15 |

## CHAPTER 2 - THE ISSUES | PAGE
| Multicultural Policies | 19 |
| NES Migrants and The Welfare System | 20 |
| Myths | 21 |
| Tokenism | 24 |
| Use of Language | 26 |
| Change | 26 |
| Migrant Participation: An Extra? | 27 |
| Decision Making and NES Migrants | 29 |
| NES Migrants as Volunteers | 30 |

## CHAPTER 3 - PROJECTS AND IDEAS | PAGE
| A Profile of NES Migrants In Your Area | 33 |
| Translating | 36 |
| Interpreters | 41 |
| Information | 42 |
| Staff Development | 43 |
| Changing Attitudes In Centres | 44 |
| Employment Policies | 45 |
| Advocacy | 46 |
| Building Up Your Network | 47 |
| Keeping Up With What's Happening | 47 |
| Getting Resources | 48 |
| Newsletters | 49 |
| Advertising | 49 |
| What is a Community Centre? | 50 |
| Cultural Events | 50 |
| English Classes | 51 |
| Single Language Activities/Groups | 53 |
| Learn a Language | 54 |
## APPENDICES

1. Population Figures for NES Migrants in NSW  
2. Interpreter and Translation Services  
3. Glossary of Common Migrant Welfare Acronyms  
4. Useful Organisations  
5. Ethnic Specific Welfare Organisations  
6. Libraries in Sydney  
7. Reference Books  
8. Films, Videos and Audio Tapes  
9. Training Initiatives
INTRODUCTION

"All steps will be taken by the organization to ensure that the services provided are accessible and available to all different ethnic and cultural groups in the community" (clause "e", Community Funding Agreement, NSW Department of Youth And Community Services)

This booklet is part of an LCSA project to make community centres in NSW equally accessible to all sectors of the Australian population. It attempts to provide centres with the information they will need to effectively address the issue of NES migrant participation in their services and activities.

In March 1984 LCSA was given funding by the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs for a Grant-in-Aid project to employ a Migrant Services Development Worker. The granting of the funds was a recognition of the important role community centres could play in the settlement process in Australia.

It was also a recognition, however, that despite the innovative and effective programmes of a few centres, community centres have not, on the whole, been responsive to the needs of NES migrants. There are no exact figures on NES migrant participation in centres, but anecdotal evidence, and the experience of workers in the field indicate that many centres have not been able to reach out effectively and service the NES migrant populations in their areas.

Some centres seem to have little understanding of the experiences of NES migrants and the difficulties they face in gaining access to services. Nor are some convinced of the effort services need to make to ensure that they are reaching NES migrants. As one centre put it "We don't have any problems in reaching NES migrants. We open our doors at 9 am and close them at 5 pm, if they don't want to come in that's their problem." Other centres claim that the question of service delivery to NES migrants is not relevant to them as "NES migrants are not part of our clientele." Often these centres have failed to appreciate the need of NES migrants in their area, and have failed to demonstrate to them that the centre offers a service that NES migrants can use.

1 The Community Funding Agreement in the contract YACS enters into with all its funded projects.
Given the attitudes that exist in some centres it becomes clear that a publication such as this cannot be a simple handbook providing a few skills in working with NES migrant clients. These skills are necessary as many centres with a good understanding of the issues have little experience of working in this field, but ultimately, a booklet about the participation of migrants in community centres is also about changing some attitudes that exist.

Therefore to be able to make full use of the material in this booklet centres will have to accept three basic premises

1. NES migrant groups and individuals are disadvantaged in Australian society and require resources to gain access to services readily available to Anglo-Australians.

2. Community Centres in all areas but particularly those in areas of high NES migrant concentrations must develop processes and mechanisms to ensure equal participation in their services.

3. To achieve this participation centres have to develop their expertise and commitment to migrant issues.

This booklet is not the first publication written on the subject and undoubtedly won't be the last. We hope centres will use it in conjunction with other resources to build up their expertise. The LCSA Grant-in-Aid project endeavours to make these resources readily available to centres. LCSA can organise training workshops for centres and the Migrant Services Development Officer provides ongoing support to centres working on their own projects.

The first chapter is a short introduction to the history of migration and the migrant experience. Chapter 2 covers the issues that workers will need to address when looking at the participation of migrants in their centres. Chapter 3 is a practical guide to ideas, strategies and activities which centres may want to try and the last chapter gives suggestions on how to implement the ideas in the booklet. Also included is an annotated bibliography, population figures on NES migrants in NSW and a list of useful organisations.

If you have any questions, or wish to make comments on this booklet contact the Migrant Services Development Officer at LCSA on 211 3644.
CHAPTER 1 – BACKGROUND MATERIAL

This chapter traces the historical context of migration to Australia and the prevailing attitudes to it. It also gives an insight into the migration experience and attempts to briefly answer the question "Why don't NES migrants have access to services?".
A HISTORY OF MIGRATION

Since the arrival of the first white colonisers in 1788, migration has been a constant factor in the history of Australia. However, apart from the periods of "gold rush", Australia has not been a popular destination for migrants. It doesn't have the glitter of America, it is too far away, too expensive to get to and too expensive to leave and tell your friends about. We have come up with different schemes to attract migrants ranging from free land in the early days, kidnapping Pacific Islanders to work in the cane fields, and the "ten pound" assisted passages which were phased out only about ten years ago.

The history of white migration to Australia started with the transportation of convicts from England, "in order to remove the inconvenience which arose from the crowded state of the gaols", according to King George III's statement at the opening of Parliament in 1787. By 1851 the population of Australia had reached 438,000, including people from non-English speaking countries particularly Germany. Between 1851 and 1861 the discovery of gold brought a large influx of immigrants, including Germans, Poles, Chinese, North Americans, Scandinavians and Hungarians. The population of Australia grew to 1,145,000: three quarters of this increase came from net immigration. By 1861 the Chinese were the third largest national group. During the next 40 years the population reached 3,241,000 and not until 1891 did Australia reach the stage where the majority or its population were born in this country. This is excluding Aborigines who were not counted until the Census of 1967.1

The presence of the Chinese on the goldfields during the 1850's was a source of tension which culminated in anti-Chinese riots on some of the fields. As part of the response to the Chinese presence the concept of a "White Australia" emerged in the late 1800's. Non-white immigration was to be strictly controlled, and it was assumed that the aborigines would either die off or intermarry with whites.

"White Australia" was given its official sanction in the form of the Immigration Restrictions Act of 1901, one of the first Acts passed by the new Federal Parliament. In the meantime, non-British migrants continued to come to Australia even though their numbers were severely restricted and they were never officially recognised.

The post war period saw major change in Australia's immigration policy. On the one hand the swiftness of the

1 From Clarita Norman: "Multiculturalism in the N.S.W. Department of Youth and Community Services" YACS Community Development Bureau Working Paper, August 1983.
Japanese advance south during WWII and the bombing of Darwin underlined in the minds of many Australians the threat of an invasion from the north. The "yellow hordes" were seen as covetting our vast empty continent. The solution was to build up our population. "Populate or Perish" became the catchcry of successive Governments. On the other hand, the post war Government was building Australia's future on economic expansion and this boom needed workers.

In keeping with the "White Australia" policy Australia wanted "desirable" migrants, and desirable meant British. However, there weren't enough British migrants to fill the quotas Australia had set for itself (there was talk of 250,000 migrants per year). So immigration officials began to look further afield. A publication by the Department of Immigration from 1949 entitled "Employers! Want Help? - How You May Obtain European Migrant Labour", typified the attitude.

As different sources dried up the Immigration Department simply redefined the concept of desirable migrants. After the British, the first desirable migrants were the "D.P.'s" the displaced persons from Northern Europe, who were chosen specifically for their physical characteristics. When the "D.P." situation eased, Southern Europeans were accepted. By the early 1960's the economic situation in Europe had stabilized and Southern Europeans preferred to go to Northern Europe as "guest workers" instead of migrating overseas. Australia then began to accept migrants from Turkey and the Middle East. Despite the undertaking of Arthur Calwell (the post war Immigration Minister) that British migrants would outnumber non-British 10-1, by the early fifties non-British migration outnumbered British arrivals for the first time in Australia's colonial history.

In the early sixties due to our regional obligations and international pressure the "White Australia Policy" was being dismantled. By the late 1960's, Australia was accepting substantial numbers of Asian migrants and refugees.

With the current economic recession and high unemployment the need for labour is not so acute. Australia however maintains its migration programme and the present Government talks of a "humanitarian" migration programme based on our international obligations to refugees and our internal obligation to family reunion. Notwithstanding the humanitarian aspects of the current migration programme there remains a solid economic basis for continuing migration. Australian industry and the domestic market are tied to a predictable and stable growth rate based on population increases through migration. Without migration the domestic markets for goods and services would be greatly reduced. Migration
creates work. Migration also continues to provide a mobile, unskilled workforce. New arrivals do the work that other Australians won't do. Studies have shown that new arrivals rarely compete with established Australians for jobs, and are the hardest hit by unemployment.

THE CURRENT SITUATION

Over two million NES migrants have come to Australia since WWII. 11.1% of the population and 20% of the labour force in NSW were born in NES countries. NES migrants come to Australia to work primarily as unskilled labourers. They have had to work at difficult jobs and often endure poor conditions. For some migration has been a success story, but for many it has meant carving out a difficult life in a country and a society that they don't quite understand, and one that doesn't understand them.

Despite the "successes" NES migrants on the whole continue to fare badly in Australian society. A wide range of social and welfare indicators show that NES migrants are concentrated near the bottom of the socio-economic ladder. Some examples are:

Occupational Distribution - Australia has the second largest overseas born work force in the world (after Israel). However NES migrants are not evenly distributed throughout the occupational categories. Over 40% of NES migrants work in manufacturing or construction industries. 52% of all unskilled blue collar workers in Australia are of NES migrant extraction. In comparison, less than 20% of Australian born work in manufacturing. Australian born and migrants from English speaking countries tend to work in skilled, white collar, or professional occupations.


2 The Ethnic Affairs Commission of N.S.W. Immigrants and Unemployment No. 2 March 1984.

3 A figure of 2,738,213 total net arrivals is quoted in J. Atkinson, Multiculturalism or Marginalization. Interchurch Trade and Industry Mission 1983. 45% of these arrivals are English speaking.

4 ABS, Census 1981.

Unemployment - Manufacturing and construction industries are the first effected and hardest hit during economic downturns. As a result NES migrants are carrying a large burden of the current unemployment. In 1984 unemployment rates for Vietnamese born were close to 40%, for Lebanese 26%, while for Australian born it was 9%.  

Income - The 1975 Henderson Report on Poverty showed 30% of Italian born were under the poverty line, so too were 23% of Greek born, but only 9% of Australian born. Every study of income distribution by ethnic origin has shown that workers born in NES countries have a significantly lower average wage than Australian born and workers born in English speaking countries.

Accommodation - NES migrants generally live in areas that reflect their work and income. In the cities they are concentrated in poorer "less desirable" inner city or outer urban areas. In some Sydney Local Government Areas (Marrickville, Botany and Fairfield) NES migrants are more than 33% of the population.

The ABS publication "Sydney - A Social Atlas" gives a graphic outline of the social situation of NES migrants in the metropolitan area in comparison with Australian born and English speaking migrant populations. The conclusion of the authors is: "Those born in NES countries tend to live in poorer neighbourhoods. There are fewer persons earning incomes above $15,000 per annum, fewer households with two or more cars, and fewer people with technical or tertiary qualifications. There is also more unemployment, and there are more houses with less than seven rooms."

---

1 The Ethnic Affairs Commission of NSW, Immigrants and Unemployment No. 2 March 1984.
4 ABS Census 1981.
ATTITUDES TO MIGRATION

Although the majority of established Australians have always supported the migration programme, the attitude to new arrivals has often been one of suspicion or hostility. As Loh and Lowenstein put it "Free rubbish" snarled the convicts, 'Pommie new chums' jeered the old hands, 'bloody Jews' chanted the school children of the 1890's, 'reffo' gibed the Australians of the 1930's, 'Fascist Balts, Wogs and Dagos' said the labour movement in alarm at post-war migrants.2 'Asians out' says the graffiti of the 1980's.

Apart from this general suspicion there are four distinct, popular, and official reactions to the presence of non-British in Australia. These reactions have been reflected in policies on the welfare and settlement of NES migrants.

Racism - The slaughter of the Aborigines, the treatment of the Kanakas, the anti-Chinese riots and the supression of pro-Irish sentiments when viewed from the 1980's can only be described as racist. The white British sector of Australian society maintained its supremacy and reacted with hostility at attempts to express non-British concerns. Publications such as "The Bulletin" and "Smiths Weekly" led vicious racist attacks against non-British newcomers.

Assimilationism - The first post war reaction to non-British migration was that the migrants should, and would, simply melt into Australian society and become just like Anglo-Australians. Somehow their mere presence on Australian soil would change them; they would spontaneously learn faultless English and miraculously adopt Anglo-Australian customs. Such a firm belief in assimilation was an important factor in convincing Australian society to accept the presence of a large number of non-British immigrants.

This attitude was reflected in an almost complete absence of services for newly arrived migrants. The Federal Government provided migrant hostels to process and house migrants when they first arrived, but once they were out of the hostels they were on their own. As it was assumed that the assimilation of NES migrants would be swift and easy, no need was seen for special provision to ensure


that they had access to services. English classes were few and voluntary organisations receiving Federal Government funds for working with migrants, concentrated their efforts on British migrants and assimilating "New Australians".

Integration - By the early 1960's it was becoming obvious to anyone who cared to look that assimilation was a myth. The large concentrations of NES migrants in inner urban Sydney and Melbourne was becoming more visible. Health and welfare services were starting to become embarrassed by their inability to reach NES migrants. The few isolated advocates of rights for NES migrants were starting to come together and advocate collectively and the migrants themselves had achieved a political base.

Assimilation slowly started to give way to new ideologies. It was slowly being accepted that there was a legitimate role for the preservation of culture and language. At first this was only seen in an integrationist sense. The preservation of culture was seen as a 'cushion', softening the blow of culture shock and smoothing the path to eventual integration. The end product of this integration could be one of two things. It could either be a delayed assimilation into the Australian culture, or be seen as creating a new Australian culture which would be the synthesis of all the old cultures; the "melting pot".

Multiculturalism - In 1973, Al Grassby, then the Minister for Immigration & Ethnic Affairs, launched "A Multicultural Society For The Future." -the Whitlam Labor Government's manifesto for migrant affairs. This new direction was a result of a rethink of the earlier integration concept. It was a bi-partisan approach and its promotion was continued by the subsequent Fraser Government.

Broadly speaking, multiculturalism sees a more permanent, legitimate role for self expression by ethnic groups and claims to grant equal status and access to all ethnic groups in Australia. It is an acceptance of some of the realities of the migrant experience and the role migration has in shaping present day Australian society. It recognises that Australian society is no longer defined only in terms of an Anglo-Celtic culture.

Multiculturalism has meant that existing services are being adapted and new services developed to meet the needs expressed by the ethnic diversity of Australian society. Interpreting services, migrant services units in Government departments, Migrant Resource Centres, more

---

English classes, grants to ethnic organisations are all part of an overall strategy to give NES migrants equal access to services.

However, multiculturalism is not a single, uncomplicated approach to ethnic diversity. There are many variations and interpretations. One interpretation stresses the "soft" aspects of diversity such as food and language. According to this view NES migrants can maintain their language and eat their foods only as long as it doesn't interfere with their commitment to an "Australian ethic" and social cohesion.

Another interpretation stresses more the "rights" aspects of multiculturalism. A recognition of diversity must be accompanied by a recognition of the rights of all residents to full and equal participation in the cultural, social, economic and political life in our society.

These are only brief descriptions of predominant attitudes on migration to Australia. These characterisations do not necessarily reflect opinions of all sectors of Australian society. Even in today's climate of multiculturalism, assimilationist attitudes are still prevalent and elements of the current "immigration debate" are reminding us that racism still exists.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ETHNIC SPECIFIC WELFARE SERVICES

The growing awareness of the need to facilitate access to services for NES migrants has been accompanied by different strategies to achieve that access. General services that cater to the "whole community" (mainstream services) are setting up specialist units, training existing staff, employing bilingual staff, providing interpreters, etc. Alongside the strategies to make mainstream organisations more accessible, the late 60's and early 70's saw the emergence of ethnic specific voluntary organisations. These organisations are community based services that cater to one language or cultural group. (see appendix 5)

The appearance of these ethnic specific services resulted from a combination of factors. NES migrant communities had started building a political and economic base, and their increased agitation coincided with the recognition of ethnic specific services as a legitimate service delivery strategy. The first agencies were set up by the larger, better established NES groups such as the Italian and the Greek communities. As these services gained wider acceptance the initiative was taken up by other groups. In 1984 there were some 70 such organisations in NSW.

1 See for example Australian Council on Population and Ethnic Affairs Multiculturalism For All Australians, AGPS Canberra 1982.
The existence of ethnic specific voluntary agencies is not without controversy. Arguments for and against their existence tend to parallel the assimilation, integration and multicultural views on NES migrant settlement. Some people see it as divisive to have separate services, they claim it creates ghettos and that NES migrants can be readily absorbed by mainstream services. Others cling to an integrationist notion that ethnic specific welfare services serve a temporary function helping to smooth out difficulties while mainstream services become more sensitive and responsive, and while the NES migrants learn to cope with their new environment. Still others see a more permanent role for such services and see them as a legitimate, integral and ongoing part of an overall pattern of service delivery.

There is no reason to adopt an "either-or" approach to ethnic specific voluntary services. In certain sectors of welfare they can provide services that will be more appropriate to their community than mainstream services. They will often be better accepted among their community than mainstream services and give NES migrants a right to choose between services.

Furthermore, due consideration must be given to the rights of NES migrant groups to have as equal an access to government funding as any other special interest or lobby group. Church based voluntary agencies are not denied funds because of the existence of sectarian welfare, Family Planning co-exists with general health services, and no-one suggests that all self-help groups for separate medical conditions be amalgamated into one large "Illness" self help group.

Unfortunately ethnic specific services are often hampered by their geographical locations and, at times, by their lack of knowledge and understanding of the wider Australian system and services. They cannot hope to be all things to all persons of the same ethnic backgrounds but they can, among other things, provide preventative and support programmes, generalized information and referral services, and they can reach the "difficult-to-reach" within NES migrant communities. In this role they supplement general community services.

Services such as local based community centres while often limited in the extent to which they can meet the needs of NES migrants are, nonetheless, at least geographically accessible and are often familiar with the issues that affect the people in their area regardless of ethnic background. A third important sector of the community based welfare network is Migrant Resource Centres. These regional centres can provide information, advice and resources directly to NES migrants or to other agencies in this area. (see appendix 4)
THE MIGRANT EXPERIENCE

For many of us if we haven't gone through the migration experience it can be difficult to appreciate the stress it can cause and the far reaching changes it brings to those who migrate.

Even moving to a new suburb, moving to a new city in your own country brings with it a sense of loss and alienation in the new area. When the move is across the world, across a culture and language barrier, and into a low social status, that sense of loss and feeling of alienation is more intense. In some cases it remains a permanent part of the person's new life.

There are many ways to look at this loss and alienation. Some compare it to bereavement, others study the stages of adaption to the new existence, others point to the factors that influence "successful" settlement, and others analyse the economic forces of immigrants as the new working class.

All these points of view can provide some insight into the migrant experience, and they are all worth reading up on. Also worth reading are the personal accounts of the experiences of individual migrants.

Instead of talking about the migrant experience from the new arrival's point of view in the limited space we have, it might be useful to draw the analogy with the experiences of Anglo-Saxons when they are away from their countries and faced with life in an alien culture.

---

1 June Huntington, "Migration As A Part of Life Experience" in Communicating With Migrant Clients, Migrant Services Unit, Department of Social Security 1982.

2 See B31 in Communicating With Migrant Clients, Migrant Services Unit, Department of Social Security 1982.

3 John Casey, Understanding and Attitudes Necessary For Working With Migrants unpublished (available from L.C.S.A.)


We have all heard of the British Raj; a period of rampant imperialism when the British East India Company ruled half of Asia. We know that the worst thing one could do was to "go native". In many ways this mentality continues. In most large cities of the world there are hangouts of the local English speaking expatriates. Many times this hangout is a British style pub. It is surprising the most unlikely places that you can find a bar called "The Red Lion" or something to that effect.

Australians are the same. We have all heard of Earl's Court, the infamous "Kangaroo Valley" in London. Why does Kangaroo Valley exist? Why do Australians stick together abroad?

Another mass emigration of Australians was the war brides who married US servicemen in WWII and went back to live with them. We still read stories in magazines about these Australian women who never quite "fitted in" in the States. Why? Why shouldn't Australians be able to adjust (assimilate?) to the US way of life, or the British way of life?

If we answer these questions we may come some way towards appreciating the migrant experience and the unreasonableness of expecting (demanding) that migrants "be like us".

**WHY NES-MIGRANTS DON'T HAVE ACCESS TO SERVICES**

NES migrants don't have access to services for a number of complex cultural, organisational and political reasons. Various parts of this booklet attempt to examine these reasons (see especially Chapter 2, "Migrants and Welfare Services"). We can, however, point to a number of key factors which contribute to the lack of access. These factors are taken merely on "face value" with no attempt in this section to analyse why they exist.

1. NES migrants don't have information about services

2. Even if NES migrants know about services, they may not understand what exactly they are for and how they work

3. If NES migrants know about services and understand them then they have no expectation that they will be able to communicate effectively or be treated sensitively

Let's look at these three reasons in more detail:

1. They Don't Know About Them - How do people know about services? If they know (and many people don't know) it's because they have been able to digest some of the tremendous volume of information that is floating
around in our society. People read information leaflets, ads in buses, listen to the radio while driving, read magazines in the dentist's waiting room and watch current affairs on T.V. You don't have to consciously listen or read something to retain it. When you need a service you may find that you remember something that you half heard or saw last year.

Imagine what it would be like if English was not your first language. You wouldn't process those few words that flash by as you drive through the city, the insistent patter of a D.J. would be even more meaningless, you wouldn't fully understand the magazine articles in the dentist's waiting room. Just as importantly you wouldn't be able to easily establish comfortable contact and trust with the people who may be able to pass essential information on to you. The majority of your friends are likely to be in the same situation.

Ethnic radio, television and press are one part of this solution but they have only been in existence for a few years. Their resources are few and the major part of the content is related to cultural and social areas and news from countries of origin, not information about services.

Surveys have shown that migrants from NES backgrounds have much lower awareness of services than other sectors of the population.1 Where does the responsibility lie to ensure the NES migrants have access to information?

2. They Don't Understand The Service - Hearing a name, or knowing a service exists does not mean that you know what exactly the role of the service is or how to use it. At times this is due simply to a lack of familiarity with the service.

With people from different cultures this is compounded by a lack of familiarity with the whole concept of welfare service in Australia. As we grow up we all learn what we can expect from our own society; when we move to a new one it may be difficult to learn new expectations. The services that a society provides are a result of its particular welfare history.

---

1 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Public Awareness of Selected Welfare Services N.S.W. ABS, October 1983 Catalogue No. 4401.1
A Polish refugee for example, may hear that child care exists in Australia but will be disappointed to find that there is little work-based child care - a common system in Poland. A Spanish immigrant may know that unemployment benefits are available but may assume that they are ineligible because of the very strict rules that exist on benefits in Spain.

3. Communication and Expectations - If we can overcome the hurdle of points 1 and 2 above, we may find that access to services is still hindered by language difficulties and the way these services are delivered.

People from non-English backgrounds have learnt from bitter experience that staff in services don't speak their language, don't quite know how to handle "different" people, and don't want to be conscious of how acceptable the service may be to different cultures. If you aren't treated well by a service you won't go back and you won't send your friends there.

If a service is hoping to involve more migrants in its activities, it will have to try to overcome these barriers on the three separate levels.
CHAPTER 2 - THE ISSUES

The participation of NES migrants in community centres brings up a number of issues which go beyond the mere "how to". This chapter examines some of these issues.
MULTICULTURAL POLICIES

The participation of NES migrants in community centres must also be seen in the context of the current commitment of funding bodies to policies of "multiculturalism" and "mainstreaming".

Mainstreaming is the NSW Government's ethnic affairs policy designed to "adapt existing programmes and services to meet more effectively and equitably the needs of the multicultural community". 1

In December 1983 the NSW Premier sent memos to all State government ministers requiring their departments to submit an Ethnic Affairs Policy Statement. The objects of these statements (EAPS) are to formulate programmes designed:

- To ensure all ethnic groups in the community are aware of the services available to them.

- To promote equal access to services for ethnic and racial minorities by positive action to ensure that there is no discrimination on racial or ethnic grounds.

- To promote services which are culturally sensitive and appropriate to potential clientele in our multicultural society. 2

The Department of YACS, the major source of funding for community centres, produced a Multicultural Policy in August 1983, and is currently developing its EAPS. As YACS continues to implement its policies, centres will find that they will be called on to show their ability and willingness to meet the needs of the NES migrant communities in their area.

The Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs has also recognised the part that local community centres can play in service delivery to NES migrants. A report on the location of Migrant Resource Centres funded by the Department states:

"Because of its ubiquitous distribution, the neighbourhood centre infrastructure warrants further investigation regarding its potential to provide an enhanced delivery of services to NES migrants. This would involve a greater measure of collaboration between the DIEA and YACS from

1 Memo to all Ministers from the Premier - 23rd December 1983.

2 ibid.
both a financial and organisational aspect. The medium through which this liaison could occur could possibly be the NSW Ethnic Affairs Commission."

Centres therefore have to come to terms with a situation where their major funding bodies have recognized the need for all services to appropriately service NES migrants in their client group. "Mainstreaming" will become one of the welfare catchwords of the eighties and centres will have to justify their services in light of it.

NES MIGRANTS AND THE WELFARE SYSTEM

Welfare services in Australia have generally been slow to respond to the influx of NES migrants and to the changing nature of their clientele. One government department was described in 1982 as "a conservative and Anglo-Australian organisation which was being forced slowly, and at times reluctantly, into accepting its contemporary responsibilities." This description could just as easily be applied to most other government departments and to the majority of non-government services.

Publications addressing the problem of NES migrants' access to services often only highlight the barriers caused by language difficulties and the lack of services which are culturally sensitive. These publications see the problems of NES migrant participation as those of service delivery, and solutions are therefore presented only in terms of strategies designed to modify this service delivery.

However, the inability of welfare services to respond to the needs of their NES migrant clients cannot simply be explained away by claiming that language difficulties and lack of cultural sensitivity have made access to services difficult. Firstly, there are a number of issues concerning the status of NES migrants within the Australian working class, and how their concentration amongst low income earners affects their access to services. A number of authors point to the failure of the welfare system to adequately address needs and issues of

---


2 A Jakubowicz and G Mitchell, Community Welfare Services and The Ethnic Communities. NSW Department of Youth and Community Services, Planning and Research Unit, July 1982.
the poor and marginalised. Despite welfare's stated aim of reducing poverty and narrowing the gap between the haves and have nots it has consistently failed to achieve this goal.¹

NES migrants relate to the welfare system not just because they are migrants but also because they are women, men, old, young, isolated, disabled or poor. Many problems facing NES migrants in their access to services are also problems inherent in the welfare system in Australia. The difficulties community centres have had in reaching out to NES migrants may be a reflection of a centre's general difficulties in addressing problems on a local level.

Furthermore, it is an over-simplification and dangerous distortion to locate the problems of NES participation within service delivery, and with the front line of an organisation, the service deliverers. Usually there are barriers within the organisations and policy making structures of an organisation that need to be broken down. Public contact staff do need to be trained in working within a multicultural society, but so do policy makers. Changing the facade will not force an organisation to accept its "contemporary responsibilities."

MYTHS

Much of the work some community centres could be doing with NES migrants is ignored or avoided by hiding behind a number of "convenient" myths. These myths are used to justify the low participation of NES migrants.

This section examines some of the more common myths. Workers should consider the implications that uncritical acceptance of these myths has on the service delivery of their centre.

1. "They don't need our services" (or "They look after themselves").

This misconception is often heard from workers in community aids, activities centres and child care centres. It is based on the assumption that all non-English migrants live within their own fully supportive network of the extended family and their ethnic community. This assumption can be attacked at a number of levels.

---

¹ See for example The Poor Get Poorer As The Welfare Budget Shrinks. Sydney Morning Herald 20/2/85.
- It comes from some romantic notion of an idyllic existence in a small rural community surrounded at close quarters by a large extended family. This situation has not existed in most countries for over half a century and relatively few NES migrants come from such a background.

- A large number of NES migrants in fact come to Australia with little or no family links.

- Even though a person may rely on an ethnic group or family for a friendship network, that network does not and cannot provide the support that is sought when a person approaches a service.

- The Australian urban landscape is not exactly conducive to an extended family or ethnic links. Houses are built for the nuclear family and distances make support by parents and friends difficult.

- The network NES migrants rely on may not have much information about services.

- NES migrants have the same right of "choice" which we consider is fundamental to an Anglo-Australian. Many NES migrants make the conscious decision to seek support outside their group.

- "The Chicken or the Egg" situation exists here. Many NES migrants have had to create survival networks among their own communities as a response to the difficulty of access of mainstream services and the lack of understanding by Anglo-Saxon Australia.

2. "They stick together"

Of course they stick together. There are sound economic, sociological and psychological reasons why people from the same ethnic groups, social class, political persuasion or common interest groups stick together.

The concentration of NES migrants in certain areas of Sydney are due to three main reasons:

- Housing, Rental and Buying Markets. Many NES migrants are concentrated in working class and lower middle class areas - they can only afford to rent or buy in certain defined areas of Sydney.

- Proximity To Migrant Hostels. Many people end up living close to the migrant hostels they stayed at on arrival. Familiarity with the area and recommendations from housing officers (who are also familiar with their own areas) combine to make this a logical step.
- Friendships, Family and Recommendations. People choose the area where they want to live according to areas where family and friends live and on recommendations of these people.

It's not a question of whether migrants "stick together" or not, but of what implications that has for the service delivery of your agency.

3. "They don't want to learn English" ("Why don't they learn English?")

The fact that a certain percentage of NES migrants don't speak English has always been a source of suspicion and hostility from parts of the Anglo-Australian population.

Till the early seventies there were few settlement services for NES migrants. English classes have only been provided in significant numbers for the last ten years. This, of course, meant that a NES migrant who arrived before then was given little or no help in learning English. Moreover, it is not easy to learn English (it is not easy to learn any language). In certain circumstances it is almost impossible.

If you are not educated or are illiterate in your own language it's hard to learn a new one. If you have to work long hours to start a new life, it's difficult to find the time and energy to go to English classes. If you have nowhere to leave the children, it's impossible to go to classes. If there are no classes convenient to you, it's difficult to go. If you are already an adult when you come to Australia, you'll find it difficult. If your native language is not similar to English, you'll find it even more difficult. Perhaps you just don't have the talent.

Many people don't speak English. A service can provide information, advice and encouragement to people who wish to learn English (it can always help to organise appropriate classes in your area) but it cannot make judgements about whether or not a person should learn or should already have learnt more English.

Services have to accommodate the fact that at any time there will be a certain percentage of their potential clients who don't speak English. Often it is this percentage who are the most isolated and disadvantaged and who would most benefit from the service.
4. "They wanted to come here" ("We didn't ask them to come here")

This is another often-heard misconception which tends to imply that "they don't have any (extra) rights (to special treatment)" or that "they should be grateful for the opportunity to be here."

The first way to look at this is to examine the statement "We didn't ask them to come here" in light of the history of migration given in an earlier chapter. Between 1788 and the late 1970's we in fact did ask them to come here. Australia had aggressive recruitment campaigns designed to meet the quotas of migrants it needed to fill its empty spaces and to fuel its economic development.

The other side of the coin is the part choice plays in the decision of someone migrating to Australia. A very small minority of migrants are those you could classify as "adventurers" - people who migrate out of a desire or a whim to see the world. For the vast majority however, migration becomes the only option in a hopeless situation. Migration is mere survival. For many it is the lesser of the evils.

In the case of refugees, few people would argue that they don't have much choice in their decisions to leave their homes. Mere survival in the face of a real or potential threat dictates that they leave. Once they have left it is usually a struggle to find a country that will accept them. At any time hundreds or thousands of refugees remain in transit camps hoping to find a country that will accept them. For some of these, the transit stage will remain permanent.

For migrants who come for economic reasons the necessity to migrate is just as strong. If you go to the south of Europe or the Middle East one thing strikes you if you go to the rural areas. In the villages there is almost nobody between the ages of 15 and 55 for the simple reason that there is no work for them. In many cities the situation is much the same. For people from these areas it is not a matter of whether you migrate but where you migrate to.

TOKENISM

Tokenism, as we now use the word, suggests some sort of premeditation or intent. Intent, however, is a "safe" concept we can all distance ourselves from (eg a centre may claim "We aren't guilty of tokenism beause we didn't mean to do it. We didn't sit down and say 'lets be tokenistic'”). Tokenism tends to be more subtle than that. Any actions taken to work with NES migrants, which in fact become only superficial changes, are ultimately tokenism.
Often tokenism can mean doing the high profile, but perhaps superficial work, while neglecting the more "nuts and bolts" tasks which might prove more fruitful.

Here are two examples from community centres on how tokenism can creep into employment and information dissemination:

- A community development agency in an area of high NES migrant density saw that bilingual staff were becoming a necessity. After an "affirmative action" employment campaign the centre eventually employed workers from NES backgrounds in a number of temporary and part time positions. At the same time there was a turn-over in some of the permanent senior positions in the agency, but these continued to be filled only by Anglo-Australian workers despite the fact that workers from other backgrounds had applied.

Part of the rationale for this was alluded to by a member of the committee. "The senior positions are all generalist positions and if we employed someone from an ethnic background they would only favor that group."

One could ask what makes an Anglo-Australian worker more able to sensitively work with the entire community than a worker from a migrant background. Surely this is a matter of job description and not of ethnic origin.

In all likelihood the worker would build up a strong relationship with their community but, while this does not interfere with their "generalist" obligations, it should be seen as a bonus. All workers bring their own orientation to a new job. Whether this orientation is towards the elderly, unionism in welfare, housing issues, gay rights, or a particular ethnic group is immaterial as long as it is not deemed to interfere with their work.

- A community centre prepared an excellent information kit on their local area. Aware that some 40% of the local population is overseas born, the title of the kit was translated into the main languages of the area. These translations were printed on the front cover of the kit giving it a multilingual look and showing that the centre was "sensitive" to the needs of migrants.

The only problem was that the kit itself contained almost no information in languages other than English, no information about services for migrants and no information about what people with limited knowledge of English should do, or where they could go for help in their language.
Both of these centres could be accused of tokenism, if not by intent, then certainly by neglect.

USE OF LANGUAGE

The women's movement gave us the opportunity to examine the way in which the use of language determines how we regard social relations. Non-sexist language such as "chairperson" and "spokesperson" are now an accepted way of attempting to reduce the bias towards males in such positions.

Language can also affect the way we construct our relations between other social groups. Currently a debate rages on the relative merits of terms such as migrant, ethnic, non-English speaking migrant... etc. There are those who claim that we are all "ethnics": Anglo-Celtic, NES migrants and aborigines alike; yet "ethnic" in the popular sense is taken to mean NES migrant. Arguments such as these may not be critical to the participation of NES migrants in your service, but it is worth noting that they take place around you.

What is more crucial and fundamental is the use of the word "Australian". Too often it is used to mean only Anglo-Australians from English speaking backgrounds. In this sense it is contrasted with words such as "migrants" or "ethnic" and even "aboriginal". You commonly hear statements such as "We have five workers here; a Lebanese, an Italian and three Australians" or "About quarter of our clients are migrants, the rest are Australian". It is also used in the media in statements such as "ethnic newspapers and Australian papers".

"Australian" does not mean Anglo-Celtic, English speaking Australians and it is not the opposite of migrant, ethnic or aboriginal. If your agency's staff are using it in this way, it may be conveying to your clients and co-workers that if they aren't Anglo-Celtic they aren't considered valid Australians. The definition of "Australian" should be "all citizens and permanent residents of Australia".

If you are having difficulties, look for alternatives. Use expressions such as "Lebanese born", "Italian born" or "Chinese Australian", "Greek Australian". On the other hand don't shy away from labels such as "Anglo-Australian" or even just "Anglo". Equality in "labels" may lead to a better appreciation of us as "Australians".

CHANGE

If your centre has not in the past addressed the issue of NES migrant participation and you now intend to do so, keep in mind that this constitutes a change in the
direction of the centre. Like all changes, this one may put stress on the internal dynamics of your organisation.

The change needs to take place on three levels:

- **Cosmetic.** A change of face for the centre: multilingual, multicultural material on display etc.

- **Planning and Policy.** (Staff level) Addressing of migrant issues in planning for future activities, initiatives, projects etc.

- **Management/Decision Making Process.** The equal participation of migrants in the decision making process and management of the service.

Ultimately the change has to come on all the three levels. A cosmetic change is initially the easiest of the three, you can do it over night by slapping up a few posters and sprinkling around some multilingual leaflets, but if there is nothing behind the facade such a change is pointless.

On the other hand, participation of NES migrants in the power structures and decision making of the centre can be difficult to effect, but it is an essential long term goal if the rest is to fall into place.

On a number of occasions staff have promoted effective participation of NES migrants only to find that they are out of step with entrenched attitudes amongst the management and decision makers. In one centre, the management accused the staff of trying to make it a "migrant centre, a place where Australians don't feel comfortable about coming to" (one could argue about the terminology but the meaning was clear). Another centre had built up a reputation of working with the migrant population in their area, yet at the 1984 AGM, the chairperson made some highly provocative statements supporting the remarks of Professor Blainey and rejecting multiculturalism. He certainly didn't reflect the opinion of a large proportion of the users of the centre.

Change also takes time - a long time. It can be frustrating putting your energies into a new area and not finding immediate results, but the reality is that building up your credibility and relationships with NES migrants in your area will take time. You may have to be content with small victories and keep sight of your long term aims.

**MIGRANT PARTICIPATION: AN "EXTRA"?**

Too often the participation of migrants, or addressing the issues facing them, is seen as an "extra" above and beyond the core function of a centre.
You hear statements like "We'd like to work with migrants but we don't have the extra resources" or "In this centre we don't work much with migrants we tend to concentrate on the aged" etc... All these imply that NES migrants are a separate group that don't have an integral connection with other groups we turn our attention to.

Our tendency to classify needy groups with tags such as "single parents", "disabled", etc means we tend to lose sight of the relationship between these groups and come to regard them almost as mutually exclusive. Look at any needs indicator list and you will see such categories, rarely will you see a discussion on the relationship between the categories.

The categories aren't mutually exclusive; you can have disabled single mothers and you can have migrant aged. Whatever the focus of your organisation you should be aware of how all groups fit into that focus, and what disadvantage they may have in access to services.

The Community Employment Program has meant that for the first time many community services have been able to employ NES migrant workers. From the reports coming in there have been some effective and worthwhile projects, but with CEP positions finishing we could ask, "Where do we go from here?". Unfortunately, many centres have taken the view that when the ethnic worker and money goes so does the centre's commitment to NES migrants.

Moreover, some workers have found that they were expected to shoulder their organisation's full responsibility for NES migrants. Anything vaguely migrant or multicultural was immediately referred to them, even if at times they weren't the most appropriate person.

This phenomena in centres has its parallel in government departments and large organisations where specialist units such as "Migrant Services Units" have been set up. Although designed to sensitiise all areas of organisation to the barriers experienced by NES migrants, many units have found that they are expected to shoulder all the responsibility and all problems. Requests are being passed on to them instead of being handled by the appropriate section. Instead of sensitising the organisation they find that they become an excuse for the continued marginalisation of NES migrants in the system.

Making NES migrant participation a core function may, therefore, mean a change in internal structures and responsibilities, with all staff equally responsible for NES migrant participation in their areas.
DECISION MAKING AND NES MIGRANTS

Community centres are run by community management committees. These committees are said to reflect the local population and its concerns. In an area of high concentration of NES migrants it is important that they be represented on the management committees, and centres wishing to address the issue of migrant participation in their service should be working towards this end.

But centres canvassing members of NES migrant communities who they would like to see on their committee should keep in mind some of the realities of community management, and the effect it can have on the participation of migrants at this level.

"Successful" management committee members tend to have most of the following characteristics:

- a commitment to welfare issues.

- they have to have enough spare/leisure time to carry out their duties.

- they have an understanding of the intricacies and legalities of the Australian welfare system.

- they feel comfortable in groups and are confident speakers (in English of course).

- they are "a bit of a fighter" able to defend themselves within the committee and, if necessary, the organisation itself against cutbacks and controversy.

- they have good knowledge of meeting procedures committee roles etc.

This combination of characteristics has meant that the most disadvantaged, least articulate sectors of the community - the people services are aimed at - have, in fact, found it difficult to take part in the management of "their" service. With NES migrant communities it is unlikely that you would find many people with that combination of characteristics, and those who have them are likely to be busy working within their own ethnic community.

A number of centres have lamented that they have succeeded in getting people from NES migrant backgrounds on to the committee, but that those people have not stayed around for very long. Often this has been simply because the NES migrant has been "inappropriate" in the sense that they were not able to take part fully in the work of the committee.

At times it has been because of language difficulties, but
at other times it is because the person chosen (coerced?) has to face more fundamental issues of survival and settlement, and can't afford the luxury of community service. Furthermore, concepts of "community management" and "participation" vary from country to country and it is likely that many NES migrants are unaware of what is asked of them and what they receive in return.

One centre asked a NES migrant user of the centre to sit on the management committee. She had been in Australia for some 3 years, her husband had been unemployed for most of that time, she spoke only basic English and she had two young children. She agreed, and came to sit on a committee made up of five workers from other agencies in the area, four long-established, Anglo-Australian residents in their 50's and her. Needless to say she didn't last long.

If a centre is looking for people to sit on the committee, look for people who will fit in with the established tone of the committee. There may be battles to fight with your management committee regarding migrant participation in your service but make sure the person you ask is in a position to fight them. Moreover, make sure the committee members are prepared to accept new people who may not be familiar with their style of work. This will often mean modifying meeting procedures.

Also worth taking into account is: who exactly are the NES migrants you encourage to sit on your committee representing? Are they representing all NES migrants, their particular ethnic group, or themselves? If they are representing a group how are they accountable back to members of that group?

There are other ways in which NES migrants can have input into decision making in the centres without being on the management committee. Centres could look at alternative structures such as subcommittees, advisory committees, regular meetings/consultations with NES migrants etc that could be less formal than management committees. Another system is for staff to encourage users, potential users, or interested parties to put their ideas in writing asking for changes and suggesting new directions; in effect they would be lobbying the management committee. There can be a conflict of interest here for the worker, but it is a system worth exploring. Finally it should be noted that the best way NES migrants could have input into decisions in centres may be through competent, trained staff with a proper understanding of the issues and experience in working with different ethnic groups.

NES MIGRANTS AS VOLUNTEERS

Much of what has been said in the last section about involving NES migrants in decision making in centres is
also relevant to a discussion of volunteers from NES migrant backgrounds. Centres that have volunteers comment on the difficulty of finding NES migrants who will work with the centre. Again, one has to look at the characteristics of those people who volunteer their time in centres. It is unlikely that many NES migrants would see themselves in a position of wanting to volunteer their services and, again, those that do are more than occupied among their own community.

Furthermore, the importance of the "cameraderie", the friendly atmosphere of being a volunteer, cannot be underestimated, and it may be difficult for someone from a radically different background to be part of that atmosphere.
CHAPTER 3 - PROJECTS & IDEAS

Ideas, activities, strategies and projects
A PROFILE OF NES MIGRANTS IN YOUR AREA

To work with the migrant population in your area your centre has to build up a good understanding of that population. You have to know: who they are, where they are from, what are their characteristics, what are their needs and finally, what role your centre has in meeting those needs.

Below is an outline of a suggested series of steps that could be taken by centres. They are only a "rule of thumb" and can be adapted to suit each centre's time, resources and expertise. Some centres may only be in a position to make a short statement based on readily available data. Other centres may take on larger projects by assigning existing staff, applying for project staff (eg through Community Employment Program), or designing a project for Social Welfare Work Students on placement. A number of centres have already taken on such projects. Examples are available from LCSA.

STEP 1 Getting an idea of numbers and distribution

Present Figures: These can be divided into "hard" figures and "soft" figures.

"Hard" figures are figures that are statistically reliable and have legitimacy in the eyes of planning (and funding) bodies. Most of these will be based on Census figures. Possible sources are:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).
- Local Government Area (AGS) profiles - your Council may have done one.
- Ethnic Affairs Commission (EAC) and Ethnic Communities Council (ECC) both have publications on statistics regarding ethnic populations.

These figures should show you: number born overseas, number born in NES countries, percentage of NES born in total population, breakdown into country of origins, length of residence in Australia, age and sex profiles of overseas born, English language abilities (see "The Language Survey" published by the ABS).

You may also be able to get figures on the number of NES among Social Security, Youth And Community Service, and Commonwealth Employment Service clients in your area. Contact your local office and speak to the manager.

See if you can break these figures down to areas smaller than the LGA. ABS gives collectors area breakdowns. There may be "pockets" of ethnic communities that should be

1 See Appendix 1 for NES migrant population figures.
identified. ABS (for a fee) will give you specific tables on an ethnic group.

Keep in mind that there are claims that NES migrants and aborigines tend to be under-represented in Census statistics as some may be unwilling or unable to fill in forms.

"Soft" figures - there are other figures you may want to look at which may not be that rigorous (they would probably give a decent statistician a heart attack). They won't give you exact numbers but they may give you an indication of the make-up of the local population. These figures may even contradict official statistics. It is worth following up these contradictions, official statistics have been known to be wrong, especially when dealing with certain ethnic groups. Examples of these soft figures are:

- percentage of children from NES migrant (NES or with one or both parents from NES) backgrounds at the local schools.
- demand for papers/magazines in other languages - if a newsagent doesn't stock them they may be killing any potential demand so ask a newsagent that stocks and displays non-English materials.
- impressions, use your eyes and ears, ask around. The statistics may say that there are no Arabic speakers in your area, yet you hear their language in the street. Why? Be careful mistaken impressions may be the result of selective hearing, racist attitudes and xenophobia.
- local knowledge - ask around among people who should have contact (hospitals, doctors, government offices) with the NES population.
- anything else you may care to dream up.

Use these figures with extreme caution. Try to work out how they occur and what exactly they mean before using them.

Trends:

Past - look at the types of figures you looked at for the present over the last decade to get an idea of how the local population has changed.

Future - get an update on the last Census and find any projections there may be for the future of your area. Possible sources are:

- Initial Settlement Tables (available through Adult Migrant Education Service, AMES,) these give figures on both hostel departures and direct arrivals into the community.
- Current immigration policies and projections.
- The Department of Environment and Planning or your Regional Information Centre may have made some statement on the future population of your area, ask them.

STEP 2 Making a statement of needs

Using "needs indicators" (incidence of unemployment, level of education, income, knowledge of English, length of residence, distance and accessibility to existing services, etc - consult an expert on this) and surveys, make a statement on the needs that exist among the immigrant communities.

Large, statistically reliable surveys are a whole field of expertise in themselves and take massive amounts of time and resources. Centres should only undertake them with extreme caution and preferably with expert help. Small surveys, such as short questionnaires or door-knocking in a defined area, are within the resources of most centres.

Make sure you have a good understanding of the ethnic/cultural groups you are dealing with. Never assume that the needs of one group will be the same as the needs of the next one. Read as much as you can about the different groups. Many ethnic groups have been the subject of recent studies.

STEP 3 Who is trying to meet those needs?

Identify all groups, clubs, voluntary organisations, government departments, peak organisations, etc that are trying to meet the needs of your area. If you are doing a survey, these groups could also be made a separate sample.

Make a statement about whether you think they are succeeding in doing so. Why are/aren't they? What are the barriers to them meeting those needs? (Be honest but diplomatic, and get your facts right). What about your centre?

Identify the shortfall in meeting needs.

STEP 4 Who could try to meet the needs?

Identify all groups etc that could be meeting the shortfall in Step 3.

Make a statement on the role of your organisation in meeting those needs. Take into account what your centre is doing, and what it could realistically do.
STEP 5 Finally, how can your centre fulfill the role you've identified in Step 4?

What are realistic goals and strategies for your centre? What steps/tasks should be undertaken?

Does the identified role fall within the present boundaries of the centre's work? If it doesn't is it feasible that the centre will be able to incorporate this new role? How is the change to be effected? Do the people concerned with the organisation have the skills and the understanding to carry out this work?

TRANSLATING

This "SPANISH TRANSLATION" appeared in a publicity leaflet:

Le gustaría juntar un grupo de juego? Un grupo de juego es un sitio donde madres con hijos pequeños se reúnan y organizan actividades para niños de nacimiento a la edad de escuela. La misma vez madres pueden conocer personas y hablar con amigas. Si usted tiene interés y quiere juntar el grupo de juego donde o si hay otras madres que no hablan el Inglés muy bien, puede ponerse en contacto con........

This reads in ENGLISH something like.

You want join a game group? A game group is a place where mothers with small children come together and organise game and activities for children of birth to age of school. On the same time mothers can know persons and speak with friends. If you are interested and want to come together with game group when are other mothers that don't speak good English contact. etc.

The above example was included in the multilingual publicity for a playgroup. We understand that there were also "problems" in one other language used. One wonders what impact such an advertisement has on the people it is trying to reach. Would they appreciate the effort made by the centre, be put off by the disregard with which their language is treated, or simply be confused by the mumbo jumbo?

Translating and getting translations done is difficult and time consuming and the general standard of translations is terrible. Yet translating written material is an essential part of the process of reaching potential NES migrant clients and catering for their information needs. This section is a short guide to translating for community centres.
Why translate?
To reach clients/potential clients who cannot read English but are literate in their native language.
To show that your centre acknowledges and accepts the use of languages other than English.

What to translate?
Advertising material used to advertise services and activities.
Important information in newsletters or local papers.
Remember it is not essential to translate everything that has been written in English. In fact a well written article in English is not usually suitable for translation. Prepare a plain English summary for translation. Keep this summary to the essentials, it may be important for NES migrants to know that you are open 9-5, but not so important for them to know that your committee meets every 6 weeks.

How many (which) languages?
Don't be too ambitious, a maximum of 4-6 of the most needed languages in your area.

Decide which languages, using a combination of the following factors:
- size of population; try to cater for the largest NES migrant groups in your area.
- length of residence in Australia; although a group may not be numerically large, or may not appear in the '81 Census, recently arrived groups have greater language and information needs as they have not had time to learn English or become familiar with the Australian system.
- other characteristics of NES groups; ie education language, background etc. Eg despite a large population of people born in The Netherlands, Dutch may not be a high priority given the general level of education of Dutch immigrants, the proximity of their language to English, and their length of residence in Australia.

Preparing a text for translation
Keep the English simple and plain - no slang, short sentences and keep jargon to a minimum.

If you have a catchy, but untranslatable, title in English, change it to a more workable title for translation.
Include extra information about a concept, title or department which may be unfamiliar to NES migrants eg "and go to your local office of the Department of Social Security (the federal government department which pays most pensions and benefits)."

Include with your original, a "job sheet" noting special instructions, points of style you require, explanation of jargon etc.

Who should translate?

Only professional translators should be doing your translations. Translating is a professional skill that takes years to master. Most of us write English, but how many of us are Nobel Prize winning authors, or even highly paid advertising copy writers? A person who speaks two languages cannot necessarily translate between them, especially if they haven't been educated in either of them.

Ensure that your translator writes the exact language or dialect of your client group. There can be a lot of variation in what outsiders may consider as one

STOP the presses. Ralph Willis, not noted for his sense of humour, has cracked a joke. It happened when he was opening the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission meeting in Sydney yesterday. Mr Willis said he hoped the Australian commission avoided the pitfalls experienced by similar overseas organisations when providing multi-lingual information for workers. Britain's Health Safety Executive had discovered that "hydraulic ram" had been translated as "wet male sheep" throughout one article.
language eg Spanish as spoken in Spain vs Spanish as spoken in Argentina, or Egyptian Arabic vs Lebanese Arabic. If in doubt ask the translator to use a neutral form of the language acceptable to all speakers.

There are a number of government translation services that will do free translations on behalf of centres (see appendix 2).

Government translation services take time (they say 6-8 weeks, but the experience of centres is that it takes a bit longer) so it is important to plan translations well ahead of time. Translations should be part of the initial step of an information campaign and not an afterthought.

Centres occasionally need short translations done quickly. If it is short (maximum 2 lines) ask around the bilingual workers in your area and see if some can do you a favour. Remember that bilingual workers are not translators, they should not be expected to do translations and they should be excused for doing a less than perfect job if they don't have the skills.

Checking translations

Have all translations checked by an independent person, even if they have been done by professional translators. Errors are common, often translators are not familiar with material they are dealing with.

Check that the translator has kept to the same level of language/formality as you hoped to convey in the original. "Come and join us" may turn out as "Would you honour us with the pleasure of your gracious company". At times this may be appropriate given different cultural values, but at other times it may defeat your purposes.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ACCENTS, PUNCTUATION ETC....

HUNGARIAN POEM WITHOUT ACCENTS IS Meaningless COLLECTION OF LETTERS

Talpra magyar hi a haza
Itt az ido most vagy soha
Rabok legyunk vagy szabadok
Ez a keredes valasszatok
A magyrok istenere
Eskuszunk
Eskuszunk hogy rabok tovabb
Nem leszunk

HUNGARIAN POEM
Talpra, magyar, hi a haza!
Itt az idő, most vagy soha!
Rabok legyünk vagy szabadok?
Ez a kéredes, vállasszatok
A magyarok istenére
Esküszünk
Esküszünk, hogy rabok tovább
Nem leszünk! (Petőfi Sándor, 1848)
Check punctuation. Dots, accents, umlauts etc which can be ignored in English are critical in many other languages, and determine the sound and meaning of words.

**Style and presentation**

Ask the translator to leave names of organisations, government departments, and titles in English and to add an explanation or translation in brackets after the name. Names are difficult to translate and to locate them the NES migrants need to know the name in English.

eg The English original "......if your group wants to apply for a grant contact The Secretariat of the Community Employment Program..." should be translated into Spanish as "......si su grupo desea solicitar una subvención, póngase en contacto con "The Secretariat" (La Secretaria) del "Community Employment Program" (Programa Comunitario de Empleo)......"

If the English words are not included a Spanish speaking group would have a hard time figuring out who to contact.

Consider doing the same with activities or concepts which may not be familiar to NES migrants eg "reúdense con nuestro 'playgroup' (un grupo de juegos para niños.....)" probably would have got across the message better than the attempt in our opening example. It is important to explain "what is" the service provided, as for example: a playgroup as a service may not exist in some parts of Spain and Latin America.

Date all material. Written information dates quickly.

**WHAT LANGUAGE IS THIS?**

**WHAT IS IT ABOUT?**

**WHERE DO PEOPLE GO FOR INFORMATION?**

Η Γρήγορη
Επαναλαμβανόμενη
Εργασία μπορεί να παρακάλεσε μόνιμους
Ensure that you give contact names and phone numbers. If possible avoid using first names only, add the surnames, NES migrants may be uncomfortable with Australian informality.

If no one at the contact number speaks the appropriate language, give an alternate contact number where someone does. This may involve negotiations with a number of ethnic specific services.

Make a statement about what language services your centre can offer to people who don't have a good command of English eg.(translated), "None of the staff at the centre speak......but the centre has access to the Telephone Interpreter Service and the staff is trained in its use."

If you are preparing leaflets in community languages always include on the front cover the name of the language and the title of the publication in English. People distributing information who don't read 20 languages still have to know what language a leaflet is in and what information it contains.

The centre may consider compiling a glossary or file of translations that can be used for centre publicity.

Money for translations

Centres should put a budget item for translations in appropriate funding submissions. Although funding bodies may be skeptical, it is in line with current mainstreaming policies.

INTERPRETERS

Centres need to have easy access to interpreters and all staff and volunteers should be trained in their use.

The Telephone Interpreter Service (see Appendix 2) operates 24 hours a day, major languages are always available but there may be a short delay for minor languages. T.I.S. should be used for all contacts where there are problems with communication. Ideally centres would have a 3 way telephone (telephone with 2 handsets) in an interview area, but conference phones and "hand free" phones can also be used. As a last resort you can simply hand the receiver back and forth.

For long interviews interpreters can be booked in advance through government interpreter services. Never use children as interpreters and avoid "friends".
INFORMATION

NES migrants tend to lack information on services available in Australia. Here are a number of positive steps to ensure that the information component of your service reaches migrants.

Information Display - In the section on "change" we said that the first and easiest change to make is the cosmetic change to your centre. However, don't underestimate its importance, your centre should be attracting people from non-English backgrounds by its mere appearance. Look at your centre - if you were a NES migrant would you go there? Would you think you could get information there or that someone could help you?

Multilingual information is a fact of life and you should have it at least in the languages relevant to your area. It should be on prominent display.

Avoid buying into the argument "We don't display it because nobody takes it". The obvious answer to that is "Nobody will take it if you don't display it".

Keep in mind that NES migrants probably don't expect or might not know that such information exists. Outside the centre or near the entrance put large signs indicating that multilingual material is available. Inside the centre group together leaflets and pamphlets in the same language. It is not much use to have a solitary leaflet in another language lost amongst hundreds of English leaflets. Mark each language group with prominent signs so that they can be seen from across the room.

Appropriate Information - NES migrants need all the usual information that you already have at your centre. There is, however, also a number of extra categories of information that NES migrants are likely to ask about. Make sure the staff have information or know where to get it.

The categories include English classes, current migration policies and procedures, interpreter or translator services, bilingual workers in the area, ethnic organisations, recognition of overseas qualifications, discrimination etc.

Information Packages - There is a lot of information already available in community languages. Part of the problem is collecting it all and distributing it to NES migrants. One way in which this could be done is for a centre to prepare information packages - some type of folder or envelope with appropriate leaflets - in different community languages and then distribute these packages to local people who speak that language through schools, doctors, local agencies etc. You can also
advertise their availability through the local and ethnic media.

The packages should also contain information on follow-up. As a minimum you should provide your address and phone number and the addresses and phone numbers of appropriate ethnic organisations that a person wishing to get more information could contact.

**Taking Information Out** - If NES migrants are at first reluctant to drop in for information look at the opportunities for presenting information outside the centre.

Information stands in public places, schools, markets and fêtes can be a good way of reaching people. Make sure that there are plenty of signs explaining what the stand is, and that the information is free. Mark the languages you have on display clearly so people will know to approach the table.

Alternatively try to visit as many of the ethnic groups that are already meeting in your area; church groups, craft groups, social groups, womens groups etc and speak to them about their information needs. Explain to them what your community centre is, suggest alternative sources of information or perhaps help them organise speakers on specific topics.

**Information Sessions In Community Languages** - Each major language in your area could have two or three sessions which could be organised in conjunction with ethnic organisations which work in your area. There is no shortage of topics you could cover. Of particular importance are sessions on services available in Australia.

A useful resource for such sessions are the BIO's, the Bilingual Information Officers employed by the DIEA. The BIO's are employed to provide information to new immigrants in their own language and are trained by the department in a wide range of topics. They primarily work in migrant centres (hostels) and adult education centres but they are also available to work in community centres. For more information contact the BIO section in the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs.

**STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

Throughout this publication there is a constant stress on the attitudes and skills necessary for improving NES migrant access to your service. Your agency needs to have these skills and your workers have to understand the issues. Ensure that your workers, volunteers, and management committee have access to proper training. There are many ways to do this:
- Send agency representatives to workshops or seminars on appropriate topics.
- If you have volunteer training ensure that it has a component on NES migrant issues and an awareness of multicultural issues throughout it.
- Organise in-house staff training.
- Invite guest speakers to centre meetings.
- Organise visits to ethnic organisations in your area.
- Organise regional training throughout the area.
- Build up a library of relevant material etc.

Take every opportunity to increase your agency's knowledge. Working with migrants can be a whole new field for many people: give them the opportunity to learn about it.

Training courses for workers should cover as wide a range of topics as is possible in the time available. These could include:

- Use of interpreters
- Information on the different cultures in your area
- Discussion of the issues, etc

Appendix 9 gives the outline of training initiatives in two government departments. Similar courses could be arranged for community centres on a regional or centre basis.

CHANGING ATTITUDES IN CENTRES

A common situation in centres is that, despite a general understanding of NES migrant issues, there are a few key people among the staff, volunteers, and management committee who hold some rather entrenched and questionable views. These views could be patronising, assimilationist or even outright hostile or racist. It can be especially destructive if those people are chairpersons, coordinators, or public contact staff.

There is no simple solution to changing attitudes, and at times there is nothing that can be done except to get rid of that person or wait and hope that they leave of their own accord. In the meantime "sympathetic" persons in the centre may attempt to change attitudes, or to minimise their effect.

One strategy is to "educate" through constant promotion of discussion, presentation of balanced views, and refuting misconceptions. One centre, for example, was troubled by a small group who were reluctant to give emergency relief payments to Arabic speaking clients receiving sickness benefits. The group claimed that "Arabs always try to rip-off the system" and accused them of having "Lebanese Back"
(a derogatory term for a false back injury previously known as "Mediterranian Back" before that as "Irish Back"). The next meeting of public contact staff included a session on work related injuries and included statistics which showed that Anglo-Australian workers have a higher incidence of claims for work related back injuries than NES migrant workers, and the Anglo-Australian workers receive higher compensation payments.

Another strategy is to create a climate where people realise that certain attitudes and values are unacceptable. The people may continue with their distorted views but they know that they can't express them or let them interfere with their work. It's not an ideal or even desirable situation but it may have the same effect as changing attitudes.

EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

Another way of ensuring that your service has the appropriate skills and languages is to ensure that workers employed in the future also have those skills. Centres should seriously consider adopting equal employment policies aimed at attracting workers from NES migrant backgrounds appropriate to your area, and ensuring that NES migrants are represented at all levels of staff.

Equal Employment Opportunities will at times mean reassessing the priorities given to the skills which centres are looking for in a worker. If a knowledge of a language and culture becomes a top priority, bear in mind that the worker may not have experience in some other areas that the position requires. The new worker must be given the opportunity to learn new skills, and the support they need to carry out familiar work.

Put a little extra effort into ensuring that workers from NES backgrounds apply for the job. Pass the word around networks within the ethnic groups you are aiming at, include the words "knowledge of community languages desirable" in all your advertising etc.

---


ADVOCACY

One of the most important roles a community centre can play is that of an advocate for NES migrant groups in their area.

Often the centres are in the best position to pick up trends in their area. They know what is happening, who is moving in and out, which groups have needs etc. The centres are then in a position to help these groups to lobby and advocate for services or resources that they may need.

This role can be critical for NES migrant communities in your area. Recently arrived groups are usually in no position to lobby for services and support. They often don't have the power base, the internal organisation, or the knowledge of local services to initiate moves for themselves.

Workers in one inner city area noted that Spanish speaking workers were commenting that a significant number of Portuguese speakers had been approaching them. Further investigation revealed that in fact the clients were Timorese, part of a large group of refugees who had moved into the area. The local information centre in conjunction with some of the Timorese organised a social/information meeting. From the momentum generated by this meeting the centre was successful in having a Timorese worker allocated to it.

In some cases centres have set out to gather more information and evidence on issues they suspect might be occurring in their area. A number of centres have initiated surveys of NES migrants in their area under Wage Pause or Commonwealth Employment Programs. Such surveys can be a useful exercise in gathering the information a centre needs for future planning. An important but often neglected aspect of these surveys is what you do with the final product. Too many surveys are simply left to gather dust on shelves. Make sure people see and read the survey, and more importantly make sure they act on any recommendations. The follow-up to any survey or report should be just as important (and just as much hard work) as compiling it.

Advocacy is also membership and involvement with local migrant interagencies, peak bodies, or issue based groups working on long term projects and lobbying for changes. Quite often an issue which concerns NES migrants in your area is also of concern in other areas. Groups working on these issues need all the resources, energy and worker time that they can get and your centre's support could be crucial to them.
BUILDING UP YOUR NETWORK

Apart from the network of community centres there are also some 70 "ethnic specific" welfare agencies operating in NSW. They perform exactly the same role as community centres except that their "community" is defined as a language/cultural group and not as a local area, yet too often centres do not regard these agencies as part of their network. In many cases these agencies are the first contact NES migrants have with welfare in Australia. Centres wishing to work with NES migrants will have to work in close cooperation with the appropriate agencies.

Also part of your network should be the churches, sporting, social, and cultural clubs in your area that cater for NES migrants. Usually these will be organisations set up by the community themselves. They all have a "welfare" component in the support and advice they offer their members, but often they have little experience and limited knowledge of the welfare system. These organisations can offer you a point of contact with NES migrant communities and you can offer them your experience with welfare and community issues.

Be aware of course of any political, religious or personal conflicts that exist between organisations in your area and determine how they may affect your relationship with them. As with any organisations there may be in-fighting and power games. Friendly overtones on your part to one organisation may mean that another may not want to have any dealings with you. At times you may have to jump into one camp or another.

Make ethnic organisations' workers and community leaders part of your normal network of information, support and socialising. Do you know the local ethnic organisations and the organisations that serve your area? Are they on your mailing list? Were they invited to your AGM? When was the last time you contacted them? Do you work with them on projects? Do you ask for their support on issues? Do you give them support when they need it? Do you invite them to your functions or to drinking sessions at the pub?

KEEPING UP WITH WHAT'S HAPPENING

The sector of the migrant welfare industry that caters to NES migrants is constantly changing; new initiatives are introduced, old sources of funding disappear, strategies take new directions etc.

It is important that centres working with NES migrants keep up with these changes and generally know what is happening.
Newsletters of interest are:

The Ethnic Affairs Commission (newsletter name: "ETHNOS"), The Ethnic Communities Council ("IN FOCUS"), The Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia ("ETHNIC SPOTLIGHT"), and the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs ("SETTLEMENT NEWS"). These and other organisations also run seminars on NES migrant issues, and lately a number of health and welfare magazines have started to devote space to these issues.

GETTING RESOURCES

The first type of resource which centres need to look at is help with adapting services, training staff, etc, within the present constraints of staff and funding. A number of non-government organisations such as the Ethnic Communities Council and LCSA have staff available to help design training programs, advise on specific projects and give talks to worker's and management committees. Government departments, in particular the Ethnic Affairs Commission of NSW and the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs are also willing to help. Ethnic specific agencies covering major groups in your area and local migrant interagencies are also a good resource.

If it has been determined that the centre needs extra resources it can try to get funds/grants for projects. A separate LCSA publication " A Funding Guide For Multicultural Projects" lists possible sources of funding.

Another possible source of funds is through private foundations. The book "Philanthropic Trusts In Australia" lists some 70 foundations that give money for charitable purposes. A flip through the book may prove profitable.

Another way of getting resources is to try to get bilingual workers outposted to your agency for 1/2 or 1 day per week. There are three possibilities for this:

- The DIEA's Migrant Services Section has a pool of welfare workers that are outposted to appropriate community agencies. These postings are regularly revised.
- Ethnic specific agencies may be persuaded to post a worker in your agency if you can show that it would be an efficient way to service their ethnic group in your area.
- Consider a worker swap whereby you exchange workers 1/2 day per week with other agencies.

1 Available from Australian Council For Educational Research Ltd, Radford House. Frederick St, Hawthorn 3122 ph (03) 818 1271.
Obviously the demands on existing workers are already heavy so you will have to argue a very good case to have someone outposted to your centre.

NEWSLETTERS

If your centre has a newsletter, you could look at including some sort of multilingual content covering the major languages in your area.

This could be in the form of original contributions. As with any material submitted for the newsletter you will want to maintain some notional editorial control. Ask for an English translation and have the original checked for style and punctuation (see the section on translating).

Another option is to reproduce multilingual material that already exists. It is quite easy to add a multilingual supplement to a newsletter by simply photocopying community language material you have in the centre. (Subject to copyright of course).

If you do put multilingual material content in your newsletter it is important that you indicate on the front that it exists. NES migrants certainly won't expect that flipping through an English publication they'll find something in their own language.

Also be conscious of where you distribute the newsletter. Multilingual material is of limited use if it doesn't reach those who read that language. Add a few new organisations to your mailing list, and find a few new places to distribute the newsletter (see next section).

ADVERTISING

How does your centre do its advertising? Is there multilingual content? Do you use the ethnic media? Where do you put your leaflets? Who is on your mailing list?

Have a look at your normal methods of advertising services and activities and see where it could be modified, or added to, to increase the possibility of reaching NES migrants.

The NES media is fairly easy to work with, but keep in mind that their time and resources are comparable to local suburban newspapers and radio stations. They need your cooperation as much as you want theirs. If you send community language newspapers and radio programs press releases you'll find that if they are short and simple the media will translate them. For newspapers contact the Editor, for 2EA contact the Liaison Officer, for local radio stations you may have to contact the individual program coordinators. Your nearest Migrant Resource Centre should be able to give you the information you need, or
contact the Ethnic Communities Council or The Ethnic Affairs Commission.

If your centre has its own advertising leaflets look at a way to make them multilingual. Sections of the leaflets could be translated into the 3 or 4 major languages of your area (see section on translations).

Again, consider where you will distribute these leaflets. Look at the places NES migrants go in your area. Ask to leave some in the shops they frequent. The kids have to go to schools so see if you can reach their parents through them. Some NES migrants may be on pensions and benefits, leave some leaflets at the local Social Security and YACS offices. Everyone visits a doctor some time so get the cooperation of the medicos etc etc etc.

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY CENTRE?

Centres should take it for a given fact that the vast majority of people who are not from an English speaking, Western country do not know what a community centre is. There may be rough equivalents in other countries but they are usually connected to political groups (eg the "case del popolo" in Italy have connections with the PCI, the Italian Communist Party), a commercial enterprise (the "casinos" in Spanish towns are the social focal point but are also run as cafés), or they are a direct part of government. The concept of voluntary, community run centres providing aid and information for the local area free of charge will probably be unheard of by NES migrants.

This is the basis from which centres will have to approach many NES migrants. You can't tell people to "come to the community centre" if they don't know what a centre is. Part of a centre's approach has to be an explanation of what it does and what its role is in the community.

Other aspects of a centre's operation may also be unfamiliar. "Drop-in" centres may not be well patronised by people used to making appointments. The role of workers such as welfare workers may not be clearly understood. The "informal" atmosphere a centre has cultivated may appear simply "unprofessional" to people used to a certain amount of formality. A centre can never hope to fully cater to every cultural expectation in their area but there may be a certain adjustment it can make, and explanations it can give.

CULTURAL EVENTS

There has always been a real danger in creating a concept of multiculturalism which encompasses only the "desirable" aspects of migrant cultures such as food and dancing. Often these are used to hide what are more fundamental
issues of access to services and power.

Yet at the same time there is no doubt that the identity of all ethnic groups is strongly tied to the visible aspects of their culture; language, music, dance and literature. Many people choose to work in this arena and have managed to build group identity and solidarity through aspects of the culture.

Over the last few years Festivals, Fiestas, Carnivales and other local events have become increasingly popular and many community centres have taken part in them. These celebrations can prove invaluable in creating links between centres and NES groups in their area.

Remember grants are available from the Premier's Department for activities that take place during the official Carnivale Week in mid-September.

References:

A useful publication is Community Activities Centre's NETWORK'S "How to - Festivals" available from Network, 66 Albion St, Surry Hills 2010, ph 212 3244.

ENGLISH CLASSES

One way for centres to address the needs of NES migrants is to provide opportunities for them to learn and practise English.

The first step is to take stock of the English classes that already exist in your area. Where are they? What type/level of class are they? Do they have child care? Are they at convenient times? Are they able to cater for the English learning needs of the NES migrants in the area?  

If the centre is in an area of high concentration of NES migrants there are probably a number of classes already established. These classes may not, however, meet all the needs that exist. There are alternatives to the mixed group, formal class. Your centre may wish to consider organising some of them.

- Conversation Groups. Groups aimed not at formally teaching English, but at creating an informal atmosphere where NES migrants can practise and consolidate what they have learnt in class. Some NES migrants get little chance to practise their

---

1 See the Ethnic Affairs Commission of N.S.W publication "The When, Where and How, of Learning English" for a list of organisations providing English classes.
English. The groups can be organised around topics of general interest, information on different service areas, or excursions.

- Classes With Child Care. Child care is essential for parents at home with the children, yet the majority of classes don't provide it. If your centre can find a way to organise classes with child care you will have plenty of customers for them. Money for child care in English classes is becoming available slowly, centres should check on the current situation.

- Homogenous Classes/Bilingual Teachers. Often a language or ethnic group has special language learning needs that are better handled in a class that brings together people from that group only, e.g., Polish refugees are usually educated young professionals who find normal classes too slow, so they would benefit from an accelerated course. For groups with special English learning difficulties a bilingual teacher who speaks their language may also be appropriate. This is especially important for language groups whose native language does not use the Roman alphabet, or whose construction is vastly different from English.

- Classes For The Illiterate. People illiterate in their own language need special classes that combine language learning with literacy skills.

- Classes For The Elderly. Although elderly NES migrants with a low level of English may not be able to learn quickly their interest in learning often remains high. Classes for the elderly can be combined with social events and information sessions.

- ESP (English for Special Purposes). Combining English with vocational or interest training. TAFE conducts a number of English plus trade courses, and in the community sector there have been a number of "English for cooking", "English for sewing" classes, these are usually organised through Outreach.

- Regular Visits To ISC/ILC's (Individual Study/Learning Centres). A number of these centres exist in Migrant Centres, Adult Education Centres and TAFE colleges. Normally they are for students to attend alone to use a "language laboratory" type set up. Child care is often provided and a teacher is in attendance to answer questions. By arrangement small groups can use the centres, if local centres can provide transport.
Resources.

- Board of Adult Education (BAE) provides money for a wide range of adult learning needs. Funds may be used for English classes in some circumstances.
- TAFE Outreach. Short term funding for community education. Funds may be used for English classes.
- Adult Migrant Education Service (AMES). Major funding and organising body for English classes. Groups of 12 or more students can apply to have classes at a location convenient to them if there are no other classes.
- Home Tutor. Normally one-on-one teaching by volunteers, but a number of centres have organised conversation groups using home tutors.
- ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) Trainees. ESOL students are often expected to get practical experience. Teaching in community centres can be credited to their course.

SINGLE LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES/GROUPS

If one NES migrant group has substantial numbers in your area consider the possibility of organising groups/activities etc in the language of that group; eg sewing classes for Spanish speakers, support group for Arabic unemployed.

Such a suggestion can create controversy in a centre where non-English activities are not seen as an option. Some centres are reluctant to organise activities for a mixture of reasons which usually boil down to the claim that single language activities would be divisive; they would hinder integration, and be seen to favour one group over another.

Centres should reject such a notion. In many instances single language groups will be the only effective way of providing a point of easy, non-threatening contact for isolated people. If your centre is concerned about "integration" you can find comfort in the fact that single language groups will provide NES migrants a base from which individuals could gain confidence and join in other activities/work of your centre.

Make single language groups an option to be considered in your centre. Plan these activities carefully. Don't make assumptions about what a community needs, ask them what they want and enlist the aid of workers with some experience of that community.

Remember, however, that single language groups do not take away from the responsibility to make all other activities in a centre accessible to NES migrants.
LEARN A LANGUAGE

One way for a centre to acquire language skills when there is no foreseeable turnover of staff is for existing staff to learn a new language.

Obviously this is a long term solution. The estimated time it would take for a resolute beginner to converse in a simple version of the new language, based on 2 1 1/2 hour classes per week, is about 3 years. But as a consolation, from much earlier the beginner would reach a stage where they could communicate on a basic level, and they could understand conversations and meetings. Learning a language has of course other benefits. They tell us that it broadens the mind, and it certainly shows goodwill on behalf of the workers towards the NES migrant communities.

Relevant language learning should be seen as a part of a centre's commitment to the on-going training of workers. Hopefully, centres would help the worker with the costs of the course and give them time off under study leave provisions.
CHAPTER 4 - WHERE TO FROM HERE?

After having read through the booklet, centres may well be asking themselves such a question. This chapter gives an example of an action plan (New Year's Resolutions?) which centres can adopt as a checklist to monitor their work in the area.

Well, where do we go from here?

Let's get everyone together and talk about it. You want to make the coffee?...
This type of action plan is the closest that community centres may come to having a multicultural policy. Over the last few years most government departments have developed such policies and many have developed guidelines/corporate plans for implementing their policies. Given that community centres are independent organisations, no umbrella body or government department can directly impose a multicultural policy or set guidelines. Their adoption is voluntary, but they are a useful and important tool for deciding on future directions. Moreover, as the effects of government multicultural policies are begun to be felt by non-government organisations (eg through funding agreements etc), centres will find them useful in demonstrating their commitment to NES migrant participation.

The plan outlined on page 57 should be seen only as an example. Centres can adopt it, add, or subtract from it as they see fit. There are probably some areas that centres may consider that they have already covered, and others they feel we haven't mentioned.

Adopting an action plan will require centres to honestly evaluate the effectiveness of their service and the responsiveness of their internal structures and decision making processes. This evaluation may not have to be long and involved, but centres will have to determine where their starting point is. Also, part of the action plan should be a statement on where (or with who) the responsibility lies for its implementation and a statement of the time scale involved.

---

1 Of particular interest to a centre is the YACS' Multicultural Policy contained in "Multiculturalism In The NSW Department of Youth and Community Services" YACS Community Development Bureau Working Paper, August 1983
NES MIGRANT PARTICIPATION ACTION PLAN  (example only)

To be implemented by Aug 1986.
Responsibility for implementation: Co-ordinator and
Management Committee Subcommittee.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA OF WORK</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of NES migrants in area</td>
<td>- profile on local area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- recommendations on centre's role/discussion paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff/volunteer skills</td>
<td>- workshops with staff and volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- attendance at seminars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- reference books, subscriptions to migrant welfare publications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Committee awareness</td>
<td>- presentation and adoption of action plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- presentation and adoption of profile and discussion paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- speaker to address committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy on findings of profile</td>
<td>- distribution and publicity on findings of profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre appearance</td>
<td>- multilingual sign outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- rearrangement of pamphlets,labelling according to language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- prominent display of Telephone Interpreter Service poster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with migrant welfare</td>
<td>- revision of mailing list</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agencies</td>
<td>- letters of introduction, visits to agencies, invitations to AGM's,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>functions etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Info in centre</td>
<td>- updating info and referral file on: English classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>immigration regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>migrant welfare agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bilingual workers in the area etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicity/contact</td>
<td>- translation of centre leaflet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- newsletter supplement in community languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- revision of newsletter/pamphlet distribution points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- talks to groups already meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- use of ethnic media</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

57
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA OF WORK</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involvement with NES migrant issues</td>
<td>attendance at Migrant Interagency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>involvement with issues groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal employment</td>
<td>preparation of policy and discussion paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>adoption by management committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>English classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>single language women's group etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual workers</td>
<td>affirmative action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>submissions to DIEA, YACS, EAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>negotiations with migrant welfare agencies, DIEA re outpostings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of resources</td>
<td>reprint of centre resources list and conditions of use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>workshops with local groups re use of equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NES migrants in decision making</td>
<td>approaches to NES migrant groups for representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>create migrant sub-committee of management committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>organise informal meetings with NES migrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreter facilities</td>
<td>training in use of interpreters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 way telephone for interview room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other advocacy</td>
<td>Taking up issues of concern to NES migrants in the area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The design and implementation of such a plan need not be the isolated work of a lone community centre. Indeed, almost by the very definition of the strategies suggested in this booklet, increasing NES migrant participation will mean close cooperation between services.

Workers from YACS, LCSA, ECC, EAC and DIEA are all available to centres to advise on projects. On a local level, centres will find they will need to draw on the expertise, advice and support of ethnic specific services that are relevant to the area, bilingual workers already working in the area and members of the local NES migrant communities. These people are a centre's best resources.