# Libraries
# &
# CALD Community Organisations

## A Toolkit for Collaboration

**Shared Leadership 2014**

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## GATHER LOCAL INFORMATION

**LEARN** about your different local communities. Build a picture of who they are, and what support they may need.

**SEARCH** beyond the data to find people and projects already active in the area.

**SELECT** the community you'd like to work with, and understand their specific needs.

*Eastern Regional Libraries saw a need to combat isolation among elderly Chinese residents in Rowville. Having left established networks in China to join their families they were now faced with barriers such as language, transport, and limited local knowledge in discovering communities outside the family home.*

**CONSIDERATIONS**
Draw on colleagues to contribute to the snapshot of your local area.

Identify influential leaders in the community – they could become trusted allies, or wary gatekeepers.

Respect cultural norms and interests.

Understand the personal journeys of people you're working with: they may have relocated due to loss, isolation, trauma or conflict.

Make sure you're not duplicating the work of other groups.

www.abs.gov.au
http://www.immi.gov.au/settlement
http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/resources/community-directory

## CONNECT WITH PARTNERS

**APPROACH** influential people in the groups you'd like to collaborate with. Keep an open mind.

**EXCHANGE** stories of the work you each do, to understand clearly what each partner could offer.

**EXPLORE** areas where interests overlap. Look for a match between the community's needs and what you could jointly create.

*The Knox City Community Health Service Centre initiated a network meeting, aimed at developing partnerships with a range of not-for-profit organisations. A library community outreach manager and a bilingual library attended to make connections with those local community groups.*

### CONSIDERATIONS

Be prepared to invest time in building a relationship of mutual trust. Talk and reflect together on possible shared goals.

Be careful of building expectations. Be clear about what you can offer, and what you'd like to achieve. Respect the autonomy of the stakeholder, and be aware that they may not represent their whole community.

Collaborations can involve more than just two organisations, and may include informal arrangements with small, distinct groups.

# DECIDE YOUR SHARED GOALS

**CHOOSE** to work together with a specific group that has a need you can address together.

**ARTICULATE** mutual aims clearly, and define what a successful project looks like. Think of ways you can measure the benefits.

**MATCH** projects that fit your aims: an event, a new resource or a joint service you'd like to trial.



## CONSIDERATIONS

Keep discussing your shared goals to make sure you're on track – you may need to refine them to keep them aligned to the community's needs.

Take a flexible approach: the program may have to change in response to community feedback.

Decide the most appropriate ways to communicate, and regularly follow up with partners to ensure shared understanding.

The group you're working with will consult with its community about the partnership.

http://diytoolkit.org/
http://doodle.com/en/

## PLAN YOUR PROJECT TOGETHER

**TEST** a project that you can easily tweak. Work towards practical outcomes for the community.

**CONSULT** with local people, seeking feedback from the intended audience. Be prepared to incorporate their thoughts.

**OUTLINE** the roles and responsibilities of each partner, with a clear project plan and shared task list.



**CONSIDERATIONS**

Be flexible and open – initial ideas for the project may change. You may fulfil the same aims by delivering a different project.

The aims themselves may change. Work through alterations with your partners, so you still meet the needs of the partners and the community.

Look for the risks. Assess the audience for potential barriers to engagement, like transport or childcare. How could the barriers be overcome?

http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/effective-engagement
http://padlet.com/

## PROMOTE YOUR PARTNERSHIP

**PUBLICISE** your intentions. Networks are important. Have the library visible at community events to meet all those other players.

**DESIGN** appropriate communications – keep messages simple, friendly accessible to your intended audience.

**DISTRIBUTE** information through channels that target the community. It could include local newspapers, community radio, flyers in shops or word of mouth.

*"To provide learning opportunities for community members with English as a second language, Brimbank Libraries established Conversation Classes. The classes were not as popular as expected, but when they were renamed, 'Practice Your English' and participation jumped."*

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http://www.mylanguage.gov.au/

# **EVALUATE** YOUR PROJECT

**DOCUMENT** the project to create a record of the activity. Did we meet our aim of supporting the community?

**CELEBRATE** stories of the successes with your partners, and reflect on challenges you faced.

**RECOMMEND** the next steps for the future of the project, and your work together. Where do we go from here?

## CONSIDERATIONS

- **Use both quantitative and qualitative measures. Anecdotes can be more valuable than raw numbers.**
- **With programs remember results may not be immediate. Look for long-term impact. Have positive experiences at programs converted to use of services?**
- **Check recorded feedback is culturally relevant.**
- **Evaluate the partnership as well as the project.**
- **Record your personal reflections for future reference.**

*Stonnington Libraries use formal evaluation but it's sharing the personal reflections and face-to-face feedback that has the most impact.*

# TOOLKIT



GATHER INFORMATION

CONNECT WITH PARTNERS

DECIDE YOUR SHARED GOALS

PLAN YOUR PROJECT TOGETHER

PROMOTE YOUR PARTNERSHIP

EVALUATE YOUR PROJECT, AND WHAT TO DO NEXT

# BRIMBANK LIBRARIES AND THE BURMESE COMMUNITY: a case study

**GATHER**
Growing numbers of young Burmese families live in Brimbank. Engaging with this emerging Burmese community has been identified as a priority by Brimbank Libraries.

**CONNECT**
To make a connection with the community, library staff consulted a trusted local community leader. The leader had an established link to a Burmese playgroup and so became a key stakeholder in designing meaningful library experiences.  Library staff also contacted the Council's "Best Start" coordinator.

**DECIDE**
After initial conversations the partners became comfortable with what each party could offer. Enthusiasm built as they worked out programs that could support Burmese families. Identifying the barriers helped them to focus: for example, mothers wanted to learn computer skills but could not be separated from their children. The idea for paired programs for adults and children was created.

**PLAN**
It was agreed that computer classes would run alongside Storytime, when the library was closed and an onsite child minding facility available. The trusted community leader "Nguri" played the essential role of interpreter.

**PROMOTE**
Nguri promoted the program, through her community connections. This direct link made a marketing campaign unnecessary.

**EVALUATE**
Continued attendance and positive sentiment towards the library were key indicators of success for this project, with the program evolving to offer language classes. Having established a successful partnership, the library, Council and community group are looking to repeat the programs, encourage attendance at regular library events, and tailor new Burmese programs for different age groups.