

ANNUAL REPORT 2011



AFRICAN LEADERSHIP, LEARNING AND ADVOCACY GROUP INC



Expression, Compassion, Ethics, Responsiveness, Accountability, Innovation, Integrity, Credibility, Partnership

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

On behalf of the Board and Management Team, I am pleased to present the Annual Report for 2011. The focus of our 2011 annual report is to reflect on ALLAG's achievements since its incorporation on 4 July 2008. ALLAG's mission continues to be building cultural bridges, and promoting a sense of participation and inclusiveness through community mobilisation, advocacy, education and development and mentoring. Now more than ever ALLAG seeks to advocate changes that recognize and value Africans, brings them better quality of life both here and in their countries of origin and gives them a voice in Australia.

Over the last 4 years ALLAG's membership has increased from five to thirty and membership numbers continue to grow, A Management Team has been established and approved by the board of management. ALLAG now have a fully maintained website (www.allag.org.au).

In its four years of operation ALLAG has been at the forefront of addressing African migrants' social issues related to cultural and political participation, self-determination, and cultural identity. An outstanding achievement has been the successful challenge of television channels who misrepresented Africans in Victoria. As part of its mission for providing African migrants a forum for expression, in 2009 ALLAG embarked on a project to defend African migrants against the mainstream media. Following the former Minister for Immigration's public announcement that African migrants fail to integrate, we witnessed an appallingly biased treatment of African migrants in the Australian media. The behaviour of the media was transparently racist and geared towards fuelling racism and further marginalizing those in already fragile circumstances. African migrants' response to these media attacks was uncoordinated, and they lacked a structure through which to express their feelings and to voice their concerns. As a result, ALLAG officially lodged a complaint to the Australian Communication and Media Authority (ACMA) against Channel 7, 9 and 10. ACMA considered ALLAG's complaint as legitimate and investigated the incidents. Its findings, officially released on 30 November 2009, found in favour of ALLAG that each of the channels had breached clause 4.3.1. (present factual material accurately) and that channel 9 and 10 also breached clause 4.4.1 (present news fairly and impartially) of the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice 2004.

In terms of cultural and political participation, following our win against channels 7,9 and 10, the Ethnic Community Council of Victoria (ECCV) in collaboration with ALLAG organized a media forum "Spotlight on Stereotypes: Multicultural Communities and the Media" on 13 May 2010. As a result of this forum, ECCV prepared a paper which put forward some recommendations – one of which was to foster greater diversity in the media. ECCV and its associated members approached SBS and several universities, which led to the launch in Sydney of a joint Macquarie University/SBS media mentoring program. The programs identify students of a refugee background who have an interest to pursue a career in the media and link them with a mentor within SBS to help them gain entry to the media when they graduate. In NSW the first stage has given 8 students this opportunity and we hope this will grow. Similarly, ALLAG



Expression, Compassion, Ethics, Responsiveness, Accountability, Innovation, Integrity, Credibility, Partnership received funding from the Department of Immigration and Citizen to implement the African Cultural Integration and Harmony Initiative.

The key theme of the initiative was: “**Promoting Cultural Integration among African Migrants: Opportunities, Challenges and the Way Forward**”. Five African leaders were invited to address this topic followed by informal discussions among attendees about how ethnic tensions can be reduced, and how to increase participation in community life. Participants made practical suggestions of things to do in order to promote tolerance, dignity and dialogue such as participating in ‘neutral’ activities such as soccer games and other sporting events that will promote friendship. This would give the opportunity for all African communities to be represented. There was also a general feeling amongst participants that government should be more active in supporting initiatives in Victoria. Overall, the outcomes of this project was a set of 16 recommendations on how to achieve harmony among African Australians and to facilitate their social, cultural, economic, and political integration.

Building on these successes, ALLAG was funded in 2010 by the then Brumby government to implement the Migrant Women Leadership and Mentoring Program. This project became the cornerstone of ALLAG’s activities in 2010 and 2011. The lack of adequate structures to allow maximum expressions means that there remain many African Australians, especially women who have been unable to showcase their talents. ALLAG sought to bridge this gap by training and mentoring women to become agents of change in their respective communities, in line with ALLAG’s mission. One of ALLAG's aims is to encourage a diversity of representations for African cultures as they acclimatise to the new culture, bring their own rich diversity of culture to Australia and embrace their hosts and new environment, a sentiment close to the hearts of all migrants and their children. Membership of ALLAG is open to anyone with interest in African affairs. We embrace people from all cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds.

With this dedicated non-profit organisation lies the promise of a renewed approach to community participation and cultural inclusiveness and a platform for ensuring greater opportunities for partnership, and delineating and securing progress for our communities as well as opportunities for our families and children.

A/Prof André Renzaho, PhD, MPH
Executive Director

OUR ACTIVITIES IN 2011

ALLAG is an outward looking non-profit organization which brings together a network of African and non-African advocates and professionals to advocate changes that recognize and value the African Diaspora as an asset and as an institution of productive networks. It fosters better quality of life for African migrants and refugees.

Post-migration, migrant women become providers by gaining employment. They equally hold some positions of power and decision making at family and community level. The rapid changes in the socio-cultural context post-migration adds more responsibilities for women and to some extent create conflicts as their position sometimes threatens the power men occupied prior to migration. Hence, the African Leadership, Learning and Advocacy Group sought to address an expressed need by providing migrant women with key leadership skills and qualities they can use to play a critical role in decision making at community and societal level as well as achieve an effective balance between family, community, work, and leadership commitments.



2011 was a very productive year for ALLAG. We implemented and evaluated the Migrant Women Leadership and mentoring Program, which was funded under the Women Leadership Program 2010-2011 by the Brumby Government. The outcome of this project has been a graduation of 10 migrant women (Africans, Iraqis, and Afghanis). These women are now leaders in their respective communities, some of whom have gained employment while others have written proposals and secured funds to establish much needed programs in their respective communities

Participant Leadership training: The leadership module was administered to 11 women. The women received six workshops (three hours each) focusing on personal leadership, writing and communication, conflict management, strategic thinking, and leader as educators. Activities included an assessment and understanding of the women's potential strengths, the link between leadership and management, handling committee and meetings, networking, mentors and coaching, problem solving and decision making, and career planning. At the end of these workshops, the 11 women were put through placements as volunteers with our partners for three months (one day a week). During these placements and mentoring arrangements, the women undertook three skill development roles by undertaking a needs assessment of their community, presenting the emerging findings back to their respective communities through community forums and writing short funding proposals to potential funding bodies. At the end of the training we held a community graduation ceremony

Mentoring component: Mentors and mentees were matched to achieve the desired outcomes. Mentors were senior managers within Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre, Ethnic Community Council of Victoria, and the



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African Leadership, Learning and Advocacy Group.

SUMMARY OF PROGRAM OUTLINE

As part of the Migrant Women Leadership and Mentoring program, participants received six modules

<p>Module 1</p> <p>Introduction to the Program and Self Awareness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ What are my strengths?❖ What can I contribute?❖ Who do I know?❖ Preparation of draft Aspiration Plan❖ English Language and Literacy Assessment
<p>Module 2</p> <p>Identifying Gaps in Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Understanding Federal/State/local governments❖ Governments' priority areas and communities?❖ Federal and State Government service areas❖ Accessing data and other research❖ Conducting and collating basic community data
<p>Module 3</p> <p>Developing a concept proposition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Converting gaps into a concept proposition❖ Developing Project Concept❖ Who? What? How? Why? When? Where?❖ Anecdotal feedback vs. collected data❖ Defining the project aim❖ Identifying useful partners❖ Partnerships – types, benefits❖ Engaging partnerships i.e.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Requesting a meeting○ Following uprequest over the phone○ Constructing a letter/email?○ The Actual Meeting: Agenda and minutes○ Memorandum of understanding
<p>Module 4</p> <p>Sources of Funding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Identifying possible sources of funding❖ List of common funding sources❖ Philanthropic vs. government/community orgs❖ For your project, what would best suit?❖ Other funding sources & assistance❖ In-kind support from MPs offices & orgs❖ Seeds for Growth

Module 5
Basic Grant Preparation Skills
Partnerships

- ❖ Understanding the grants’ guidelines
- ❖ Unpacking a grant application form
- ❖ Categorisation of a mock Grant to identify i.e.
 - Conditions of Grant
 - Guidelines
 - Drafting a contract or an agreement

Module 6
Writing a Tender/ Grants
Response

- ❖ The importance of Partnerships
- ❖ Obligations of the “lead agency”
- ❖ Aspiring – not incorporated or DGR status
- ❖ Basic Writing Principles
- ❖ Preparing a mock Grant response
- ❖ How to present professionally

PARTICIPANTS PROFILE AND SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Ambayaynesh Yekurn (Ethiopia) Africa



Background

Ambayaynesh arrived in Australia 17 years ago. Although she was born in Sudan, she has an Ethiopian background. Since arriving in Australia she has studied and completed a Bachelor of Nursing in South Australia as well as completing a phlebotomy training course (blood collection). She is involved in the Ethiopian church choir and Egyptian youth classes. At the time of enrolling in the course she believed that her communication skills were good when she was with family and friends. However, with other communities she sometimes found it hard to communicate. She speaks four languages and is interested in talking with women who go through problems such as alcohol, drugs, homelessness and physical abuse. These topics have always

been on her mind and she would like to work with people that have similar issues.

Aspiration Plan

Ambayaynesh feels a strong sense of pride that she completed her year 12 and university studies. She believes that helping and supporting people, as well as respecting them for who they are is

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an important lesson in life. If she had the power to change one thing in the world it would be to help and provide each person in need with the help they need. She feels that time management, self-awareness, knowing the services available to her, how to work in a team environment and learning how to be a mentor is what she will take away from the leadership training. She would like people to think of her as a hard worker and committed to the needs of the community. One year after completing the course she would love to be working with young people in the Department of Health, focusing on health education programs. In five years she would like to travel to third world countries to provide help for those in need.

Her Project

“Ethiopian women in sports” is a project she initiated to engage many young Ethiopian women and their families in weekly soccer training as a platform for family gathering and information sharing. This involves inviting culturally specific guest speakers (e.g. healthcare workers, police liaison officers) before or after soccer games, to come and talk about such things as drink driving, and common health issues in the communities. She hopes that through this project young women will be more active in sport and the community, be engaged with their local communities as well as build relationships with service providers in their community. What she liked about the Migrant Women Leadership and Mentoring course was the practical guidance on information gathering, converting ideas into projects, and help with summarising data in order to attract funding. The outcome from the course is the continuing mentoring in grant writing she receives to make her project a reality.

Huda Mohammed (Ethiopia) Africa



Background

Huda has been in Australia for 11 years and her passion is to work with parents giving them the skills to support their children and giving youth hope for their future. She has completed a Muslim focused leadership course through Brimbank Council and is involved as a volunteer the Oromo Women Islamic Society (OWIS). Although Huda has identified herself as an assertive woman, she aspires to gain skills and qualifications to be able to run community projects.

Aspiration Plan

Huda believes that if she had the power to change a thing in the world it would be to organize classes for parents to learn how to raise children intellectually from birth to teenage years. At the time of enrolling in the course she believed that greater confidence and experience was what she would take away from the leadership training. Huda’s one year goal is to see herself working with the council or community centres in order to become a community developer. She feels that those who know her best would

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describe her as a good listener, sensible, responsible, and reliable. What she wants for her community in the next five years is for her community to socialize with other communities. She wants to pursue further studies in community development in order to help her community achieve this goal.

Her Project

Her project the “Little Princesses Party” is about fighting the issue of favouring boys over girls in her community. Her plan is to organise a party for girls with their female parents. The advantage of this project is to give girls a sense of equality in life and help many communities realize the value and importance of girls and women in contemporary societies. Through this project she would like to achieve her goal of putting a smile in every young girls’ face, to help them develop confidence, and to feel as special as their boy counterparts. What she liked about the leadership course was that everybody had a chance to explore their own ideas. This opportunity made her to realize that her voice can be as important as other individuals and can be heard too. Throughout the course she was able to meet new people from different nationalities with different ambitions. In particular, she learnt how to write grant proposals, how to map up funding opportunities, and the importance of starting through Seeds for Growth

Hawa Bashir Hassan (Somalia) Africa



Background

Hawa arrived in Australia in 2009 and first settled in Adelaide. She wants to make friends and learn how to manage groups of people. She is interested in family and women leadership and in problem solving skills

Aspiration Plan

Hawa likes looking after children, as well as enjoys women’s groups. She has learnt to be patient and honest. Her fondest memory was when she got her first job in Australia. In enrolling in the leadership course her hope was to gain knowledge about group dynamics, to develop stronger spoken and written English skills, and to make friends. Within five years time, she would like to be known as an encouraging person, who is good at bringing people together and to see her community successfully

integrated

Her Project

Her project, entitled “the Somali women’s peace” aims to develop a support group for vulnerable women and children. She plans that women and children will meet once a week to discuss community and settlement issues, family and parenting issues, link women to services, explore their past experiences and how they affect their settlement in Australia. The overall aim is to improve mental health and happiness. The leadership course was a fantastic opportunity to discuss and develop each woman’s project idea, to increase knowledge and skills in leading the community; learning about different cultures and traditions; and to improve rigour, discipline

Expression, Compassion, Ethics, Responsiveness, Accountability, Innovation, Integrity, Credibility, Partnership and self-motivation. Since completing the course, she has linked with Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre's Broadmeadows Settlement program to host and support groups and link migrant women into services.

Lucie John (Liberian) Africa



Background

Lucie is from Liberia and came to Australia nearly two and half years ago. She studied Aged and Community Care and is currently working as an after school supervisor. She enrolled in the leadership course because she wanted to develop her leadership skills and to become a role model in her community. In particular, she wanted to develop her public speaking skills and confidence to be a leader. She regularly volunteers at her local church and is the 'go to person' for Liberian and Sierra Leone women living in the Western suburbs of Melbourne who require support.

Aspiration Plan

Lucie feels proud that she was part of the women's peace building in Sierra Leone. If she had the power to change one thing it would be to stop women's violence and rape. She feels that to be able to serve her community as a good leader will be the best thing she could take away from the leadership training.

Her project

Lucie's project was to get elected as a community leader in her community. She found the leadership course very useful and timely because one month after the training they held an election of community leaders in her community. With the training, she felt she would not hesitate to go for the Women's Leadership position because she felt empowered and well equipped to carry out her duties. Skills she learnt as part of the course include knowing how to apply for grants and follow funding guidelines, how to look for funding opportunities, and to forge partnership through auspicing arrangements. At the completion of the course Lucie was undertaking a scoping exercise to identify funding opportunities to support women leadership among Liberian migrants in Victoria.

Ann Shabo (Iraqi)



Background

Ann was born in Iraq and arrived in Australia two and a half years ago and speaks Assyrian Chaldean. She has worked as a volunteer helping people with disabilities for nine years in Iraq and is currently working as a teacher with children at her local church. She has a passion for human rights. She is keen to work within a team and is interested in refugee issues, particularly those related to the refugee experience. She enrolled in the leadership course develop her leadership skills and networks.

Aspiration Plan

Ann is proud of her Certificate III in Writing and Reading. She acknowledges that she can't change the world, but she knows that she can change herself to make a difference. Such change encompasses becoming a good community leader, being known as someone who is good for her community and a reliable person in her workplace. Her dream job is to work with her community, hence she wants to complete certificate III in community development. She is concerned that when young people arrive in Australia they become depressed. Therefore, improving her leadership skills could help her transform her community.

Her Project

Her project's aim is to support people with Intellectual disabilities, whilst focusing on strategies to enhance education of those in need within her community. Initially lacking confidence, she felt that the Women's Leadership Program helped boost her self-esteem and confidence in aspiring for leadership roles in her community. She stated: *"I valued the mentorship aspect of the training. It inspired me greatly in my leadership role. Overall the knowledge that I had gathered during the duration of the course will propel me into the leadership role which will benefit my community"*. After completing the course she has submitted applications under the Seeds for Growth and Hume City Council with great success. She has since been linked to job opportunities and now employed at AMES as a Community Guide.

Hana'a Shimoon (Iraq)



Background

Hana'a arrived in Australia from Iraq two and half years ago. She speaks Chaldean Assyrian and Arabic. She currently studies community service and is interested in working with culturally and linguistically diverse communities. She enrolled in the course to develop her skills and understanding of how to identify and respond to community needs. She has completed the following qualifications whilst in Australia: Cert I & II in Information technology; Cert III and IV in English Language; Diploma in Community Service, and holds a Bachelor in Translation from Iraq. She is currently undertaking work placement in Coolaroo West Community House and has previously done another placement at VASS. She identifies herself as a

bright woman who understands that to be a good leader she must also follow others and has a strong belief in teamwork and cooperation. She believes that 'the group must work together to find a solution'. She enrolled in the course to develop leadership skills to be able to address family integration-related issues.

Aspiration Plan

Hana'a prides herself on being able to forgive people when they make mistakes and to stand up for her friends, family, and community. She believes that speaking the truth is very important. If she had the power to change one thing in the world it would be to end abuse against



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men, women, and children. The most important thing she took away from the leadership training is the opportunity to increase her knowledge on how to develop a new idea and seek funding to address social issues in her community.

Her project

Hana's project aims to provide computer classes to 5 women aged 40- 55 years from Chaldean-Catholic Iraqi community. The project aims to increase computer skills & knowledge, confidence and pathway to employment, and minimise minimize social isolation by meeting other people, chat with families and friends overseas through skype on computer. She liked the course because she developed some research skills which allowed her to identify the service gaps in her community and to consult with her community to explore strategies to convert these needs into a proposal. She was exposed to funding opportunities and how to identify them through internet (e.g. Philanthropy Australia). She also learnt that these funding organisations don't give funding to individuals so one must be part of group to get funding and must have a formal legal structure. She learnt how to complete application forms and to comply with guidelines. At the completion of the course, she had started a scoping exercise to identify funding opportunities for her community.

Arizo Iria (Afghani)

(Photo not available)

Background

Arizo is an Afghani woman who has been in Australia for 22 years. Her passion is around advocating for human rights and she is involved in projects supported by the Humanitarian Crisis Hub. She has completed a non- accredited interpreting course and at the time she enrolled in the course she was volunteering and involved with the Afghan community in the South Eastern region of Melbourne. She aspires to be a 'bridge' between services and the community to aid better understanding and response to the needs of Afghanis. She is keen to be a role model for her community and family- in particular her children. She speaks more than 6 languages: Hindi, Pashto, Dari, Farsi, Parsian, Hazargi and Arabic. Through her work as an interpreter she has learnt the value of working in a team.

Aspiration plans

Arizo prides herself on bringing up her children to be good citizens as well as helping people with language barriers. She sees the importance of being an active person in her community and believes that she has grown as a person by learning to have more control over her emotions. She feels most passionate about human rights issues, specifically towards women and children. While experienced in roles of community leadership, she feels that the leadership training will enhance her ability to lead, and to be seen as a good friend, mother, and companion as well as someone who is smart, friendly, funny, a good role model for the community, and sincere. Hence, in enrolling in the course, Arizo's most important goal for her future was to be a good community leader. She hopes that in years to come her community will be more caring to each other and hopes that there will be more tutoring/education for the young people to keep them off the streets and away from drugs. She feels that becoming a good public speaker, good listener, and a good writer will be of great importance to making her dreams come true and to understand



Expression, Compassion, Ethics, Responsiveness, Accountability, Innovation, Integrity, Credibility, Partnership and challenge the stereotypes about her community by the main stream media. She dreams about being able to make her own documentaries in a simple but effective way to educate people in her community about world issues.

Her Project

Arizo's aim is to create three projects: Afghani Homework Club, English Bilingual Conversation, and Domestic Violence Support and Information Group. She plans to achieve this by providing support and information to the Afghan community about what is available for their children and also for themselves; and extra tutoring to help their children raise their academic levels. The Afghani Homework Club aims to reach and support at least 10 or more students to have better marks at school, achieve/ pursue their academic goals, to become good citizens and well integrated members of the Australian community. The English Bilingual Conversation aims to reach and support at least 15 or more people to learn and be able to communicate better with the rest of the community and as well as becoming more independent. The Domestic Violence Support and Information Group aims to reach and support at least 10 or more Afghan families to help them understand the law around family violence and also, to learn how to reach services that are available in the community if they need support. What she liked about the course was the fact it provided the required skills to achieve her objectives and she found the mentoring components very useful and practical. At the completion of the course she was already scoping potential funding sources and partners and preparing proposals for submission.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

ALLAG has facilitated education pathways for disenfranchised African refugees in Swan Hill, Shepparton, and the Melbourne metropolitan. It has successfully enrolled 6 students in TAFE, 5 students for undergraduate studies, 3 students for honours, 4 students for a masters' degree, and 3 students for a PhD degree. This has been achieved by providing them with academic support (through mentoring and supervision) as well as coaching them on scholarships opportunities.

ALLAG has successfully raised money for NGOs to address health issues in Africa (e.g. raising money for MSF to address women sexual violence in the democratic republic of Congo where 12% of the country's women have been raped at least once or 48 women are raped every hour).