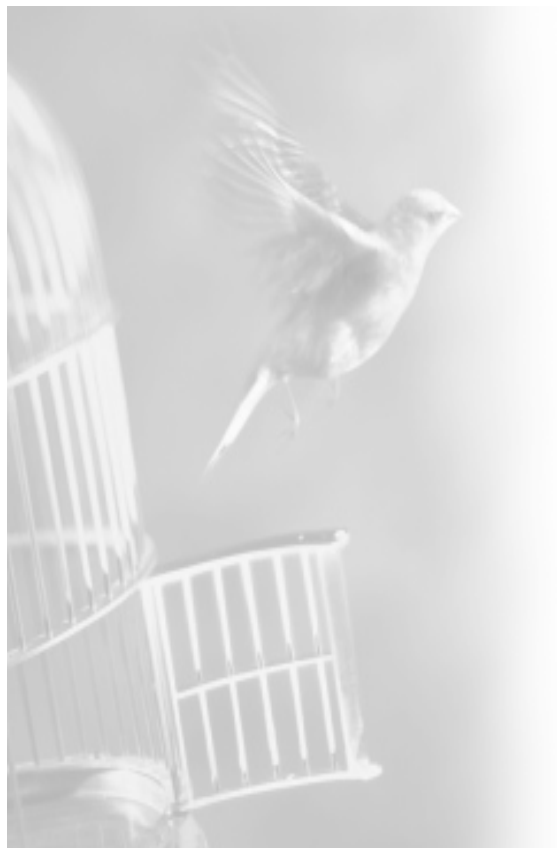


COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

A MODEL FOR PROMOTING HARMONY AND UNDERSTANDING OF AUSTRALIAN MUSLIMS



AN EVALUATION REPORT SEPTEMBER 2004

This Project is proudly supported by the
Australian Government's *Living in Harmony* initiative
Administered by the
Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous
Affairs
The *Living in Harmony* initiative aims to promote community
harmony
It recognises that whatever our background and beliefs, we are
United as Australians
& want to live in a country that is
Free of Racial Intolerance

For more information
On the *Living in Harmony* initiative visit
www.immi.gov.au/harmony

Front cover graphic designed by Adeeba Nabulsi
Prickly Pear Graphic Designer

TABLE OF CONTENT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	I
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	II
INTRODUCTION	1
PURPOSE OF PROJECT.....	1
BACKGROUND	1
COMMUNITY EVENT DELIVERY MODEL	4
INTRODUCTION	4
ESTABLISHING A STEERING COMMITTEE	4
PLANNING.....	5
COMMUNITY EVENT PROGRAM	5
PROMOTIONAL STRATEGY	6
EVALUATION	6
SCHOOL PROGRAM DELIVERY MODEL	7
PLANNING.....	7
SCHOOL PROGRAM	7
EVALUATION	9
COMMUNITY EVENTS KEY FINDINGS.....	10
METHODOLOGY	10
INTRODUCTION	10
PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS.....	10
EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROMOTIONAL STRATEGY.....	11
PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION.....	11
COMMUNITY EVENT ISSUES ARISING	13
INTRODUCTION	13
1. COST OF EVENT	13
2. COORDINATION OF VOLUNTEER SPEAKERS.....	13
3. REACHING THE TARGET AUDIENCE	13
4. IMPACT OF THE PROJECT ON THE COMMUNITY	14
5. DEFFERENTIATING BETWEEN MUSLIMS AND ISLAM.....	14
6. RELIGIOUS CELEBRATIONS IN PRESCHOOLS	14
7. LOCAL MEDIA	15
CONCLUSION	15
SCHOOL PROGRAM KEY FINDINGS.....	17
INTRODUCTION	17
TEACHER TRAINING SESSIONS	17
STUDENT SESSIONS.....	18
SCHOOL PROGAM ISSUES ARISING	21
ENGAGING SCHOOLS.....	21
CONCLUSION	21
CONCLUSIONS.....	22
APPENDECIES.....	A

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The *Communities Together* project has been developed by the Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne) (MIC) and funded by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA), 2004 *Living in Harmony* community grants program.

Thanks are extended to the project steering committee with representatives from local Councils, local churches, Victoria Police, Department of Education, Young Muslims of Australia, Islamic Council of Victoria and in particular, the Knox Interfaith Network for their tireless enthusiasm for the project and many hours of volunteering in attending regular steering committee meetings and assisting at the community events.

Special thanks are extended to Issam Nabulsi, Saara Sabbagh, Susan Carland, Sherene Hassan and Bibi Grenade who all spoke so eloquently at community events and school sessions. Thank you for your openness and honesty in sharing your experiences and knowledge with others.

Deep gratitude is extended to the following people for their guidance, information and support for the project and project officer.

Susan Carland	Young Muslims of Australia
John Commins	Knox Interfaith Network
Mary Corkeron	St John's Uniting Church - Mt Waverley
Chris Cosgriff	Victoria Police - Region 4
Darielle Crawford	City of Whitehorse
Peter Evans	Knox Interfaith Network
Riad Galil	ISOMER & Knox Interfaith Network
Bibi Grenade	Young Muslims of Australia
Emma Hawke	City of Whitehorse
Sherene Hassan	Islamic Council of Victoria
Judy McDougall	Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne)
Cherie Messerle	Department of Education – Eastern Region
Issam Nabulsi	Young Muslims of Australia
Julius Peiker	City of Monash
Sally Palmer	Knox Interfaith Network
Mary Ryan	Knox City Council
Saara Sabbagh	Young Muslims of Australia
Josephine Sim	Glen Waverley Uniting Church
Spencer Smith	Victoria Police
David Syme	Heathmont Inter-Church Help
Ahmed Tawfik	ISOMER & Knox Interfaith Network
Maurice Taylor	Knox Interfaith Network
Rocky Varbaro	Manningham City Council

Niquita Meyers (Project Officer)
September 2004

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Migrant Information Centre (MIC) received funding through the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA), 2004 *Living in Harmony* community grants program for the *Communities Together* project. The project aimed to address racism and to increase inter-faith understanding of Islam by establishing links between Muslim and non-Muslim communities across 5 local government areas in the Eastern Region (Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash and Whitehorse).

A project worker, supported by a steering committee undertook the project from October 2003 to September 2004.

The project was comprised of three main components:

1. The planning and delivery of community events.
2. The facilitation of education session in primary and secondary schools.
3. The implementation of a community development model for promoting harmony within the community between Muslim and non-Muslim families.

Through the implementation of the *Communities Together* project the Migrant Information Centre developed a community development model that promoted harmony between Muslim and Non-Muslim families. This was achieved through the planning and delivery of community events and information sessions in schools in the five local government areas identified.

A steering committee was established in November 2003 with representatives from local Government, inter-church councils, interfaith networks, Islamic groups, Victoria Police, Department of Education and Migrant Information Centre. The steering committee played an integral role in supporting the project worker in the planning and delivery of the community events and information sessions. Monthly meetings evaluating the progress and delivery of the project were held throughout the project.

Drawing from suggestions made by the steering committee at the initial steering meeting, two events in different suburbs of each of the five Local Government Areas (LGAs) were planned. The steering committee identified speakers and issues to be addressed in the community event program. The program included an Islamic art and craft exhibition; as well as an opportunity for participants to have their name written in Arabic calligraphy and to have henna body art. Child minding and games for children were provided at weekend events so that families were able to attend. The events were concluded with a meal, giving participants the opportunity to socialise together in an informal setting.

A promotional leaflet, media release and promotional strategy were developed. Events were promoted through the local media, church newsletters, school newsletters and the Migrant Information Centre's mailing lists and newsletters.

Each event was evaluated through a feedback sheet completed by participants at each community event. Feedback sheets for each community event were collated. Based on the analysis of the feedback by the steering committee, changes to the program were made where necessary.

Three schools from each LGA (1 State Primary School, 1 State Secondary School and 1 Independent school) were invited to participate in the project. Schools were given the opportunity to choose from three program opportunities.

1. An education session with students
2. A professional development session for staff
3. An information session for parents

Each session ran for approximately 1 hour. A speaker from Young Muslims of Australia or the Islamic Council of Victoria facilitated the sessions. Each program was tailored to meet the needs of the school, based on discussions with the project worker and school staff.

Feedback sheets were developed for students and teachers who participated in the project. An analysis of the feedback for each school session was presented to the steering committee for further consideration

Overall the Majority of participants attending both the school information sessions and the community events were pleased with the events as a way of learning about Islamic culture. 80% of participants attending the community events were “pleased” and more than 40% of participants at each event had a change in understanding of Islam. 50% of the teachers attending the training sessions found the information “very relevant” to their workplace and their role. Over 87% of secondary students were “pleased” with the session as a way of learning about Islamic culture.

A combination of promotional strategies proved to be most effective when promoting the community events, in most cases participants found out about the event through their local church, the local media and through word of mouth. The Knox Interfaith Network played an integral role in the promotion of the community events.

During the course of the project four issues arose relating to the delivery of the community event model: the cost of the event, reaching the target audience, differentiating between Muslims and Islam and the coverage of the events by local media. Other issue identified by the steering committee were the coordination of volunteer speakers, measuring the impact of the project on the community, and the celebration of religious holidays in preschools.

Though the impact on the wider community is difficult to measure, links between Muslims and Non-Muslims in the community have been successfully established.

Community events participants expressed an interest in further opportunities to learn more about Islam as well as opportunities to socialise with people of different faiths and cultures. Participants from other regions, in particular the greater Dandenong region were interested in holding similar events in their region.

The Islamic Council of Victoria is keen to adopt the *Communities Together* model for future use in other regions as well as pursuing the objective of reducing negative stereotypes in schools by providing school information sessions.

■

INTRODUCTION

The Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne)(MIC) applied for and received funding through the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA), 2004 *Living in Harmony* community grants program. The *Living in Harmony* Grant encourages local communities to play a positive role in promoting community harmony between people of different cultural, racial, religious or social backgrounds and addressing issues of racial intolerance in the community.

PURPOSE OF PROJECT

Since September 11th, the war on terror, the Bali bombing and the Iraqi war, many Muslims in the region have expressed fear of harassment in public places, in particular women who wear hijab as well as teenagers and children at school. In response to these issues, *Communities Together*, aimed to address racism and to increase understanding of Islam by establishing links between Muslim and non-Muslim communities across five local government areas in the Eastern Region (Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash and Whitehorse).

COMMUNITIES TOGETHER, AIMED TO:

- Promote harmony through increased understanding of Islam and of Muslim families living in Australia, and
- Address racism by reducing negative stereotypes of Islam.

THE OBJECTIVES OF COMMUNITIES TOGETHER WERE TO:

- Increase community understanding of Islam and of Muslim families living in Australia - their traditions and values.
- Increase community understanding in Primary and Secondary schools of Islam in Australia.
- To develop a community development model for promoting harmony within the community between Muslims and non-Muslims families.

BACKGROUND

The Migrant Information Centre in partnership with Young Muslims of Australia has held several very successful women's only functions, entitled "My Dress, My Image, My Choice". These functions have provided the opportunity for women from all faiths and backgrounds to learn about Islam and Islamic dress in a fun and informal setting, to meet each other, to talk and to eat together.

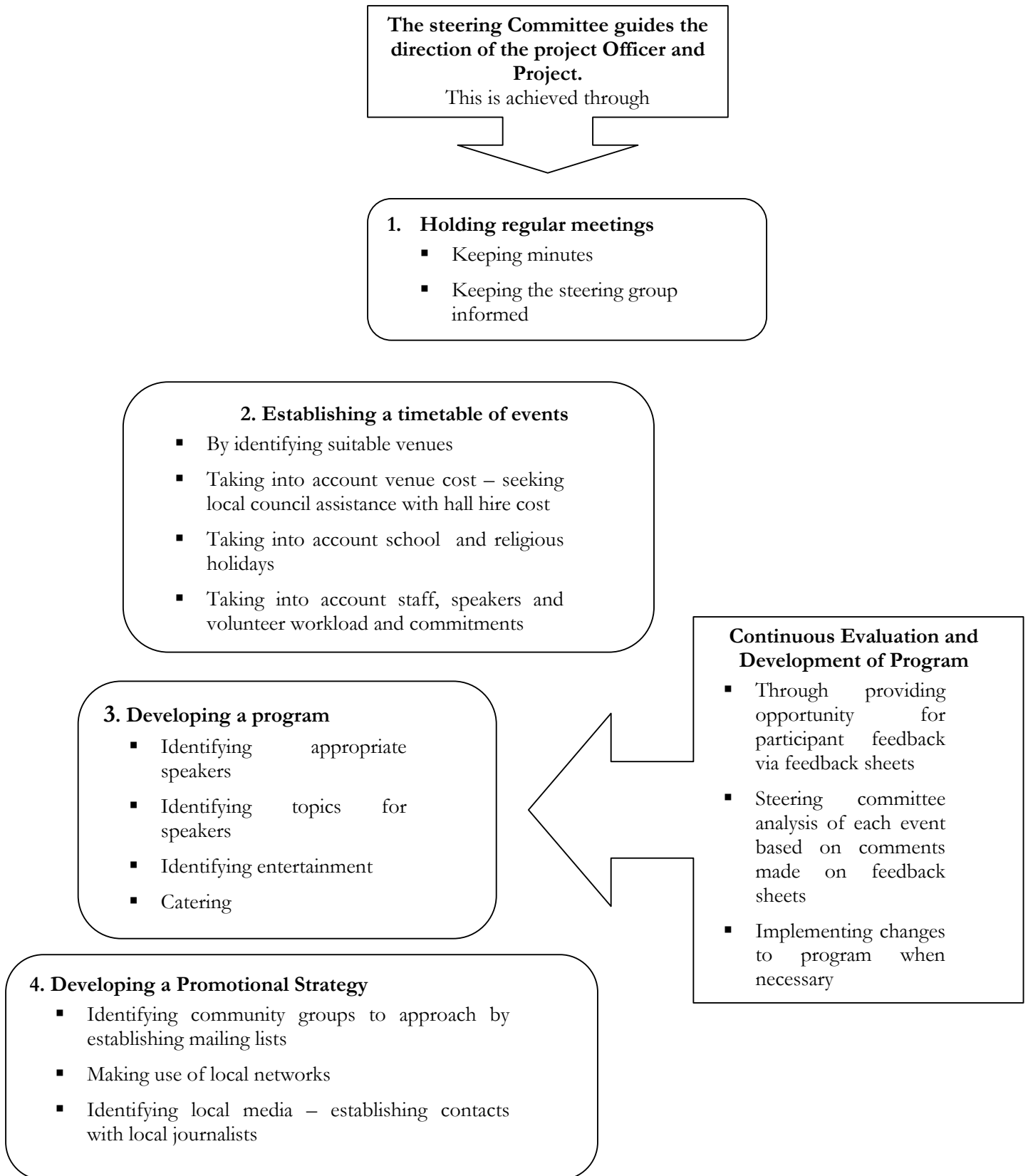
More recently, in September 2003, the MIC held an inter-faith family day in the City of Manningham entitled, "My Beliefs, My Values, My Family". Families from all faiths and backgrounds were invited to attend an afternoon tea with entertainment provided by different religious groups within the City of Manningham. Community leaders spoke on how their faith and family values impacted on their lives in Australia. Although this function was successful in promoting harmony between communities from different religious backgrounds, in regards to Islam this forum did not specifically address the world events and negative media stereotypes that have influenced the opinion of the wider community.

Through the implementation of *Communities Together*, the Migrant Information Centre aimed to develop a community development model that included men and families that would meet the objective of promoting harmony between Muslims and Non-Muslims.

This was achieved through the planning and implementation of community events and information sessions in schools in the five local government areas identified.

This report outlines the methodology and community development model developed through the project as well as an evaluation of the events and school sessions held throughout the project.

Figure1: Community Event Delivery Model



COMMUNITY EVENT DELIVERY MODEL

INTRODUCTION

One of the objectives of the *Communities Together* project was to develop a community development model for promoting harmony within the community between Muslims and non-Muslims families. A community development model was developed through the course of the project the main components of this model are outline in this report below.

ESTABLISHING A STEERING COMMITTEE

A project worker was employed part-time over 10 months to facilitate the project. The project worker completed a literature review and then established a steering committee.

Representatives from the following organisations were invited to join the steering committee:

- Migrant Information Centre
- Young Muslims of Australia
- Islamic Council of Victoria
- Islamic Society of Melbourne, Eastern Region (ISOMER)
- Department of Education (Eastern Region)
- Local Government - Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash and Whitehorse
- Victoria Police Multicultural Unit
- Knox Inter-faith Network
- Inter-Church Council Representatives from Maroondah, Manningham Monash and Whitehorse

THE ROLE AND PARTICIPATION OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE

The steering committee played an integral role in:

- Guiding the direction of the project worker in the planning of the events held across the region.
- Participating in the planning of the events by identifying relevant speakers, suitable locations and in establishing suitable dates.
- Endorsing all promotional material, as well as promoting the events through their local networks and newsletters.
- Supporting the project worker by volunteering to assist on the day of the events where necessary and possible.

The steering committee continued to meet monthly throughout the project evaluating the progress and delivery of the project.

PLANNING

The steering committee first met in November 2003, at this stage a community event program, a timetable for events and a promotional strategy was developed.

Initially the project was planned to commence in December. However, following the advice of the steering committee that this would not allow sufficient time to promote the events effectively during this busy period of the year and that many people were already making plans for the December and January holidays, the first event was held over until February. It was decided the first event would be held in the City of Knox due to the fact that the Knox Interfaith Network had a significant number of representatives from both the Muslim and Non-Muslim community attending the steering committee meeting.

Drawing from suggestions made by the steering committee, two events in different suburbs of each of the five Local Government Areas (LGAs) were planned. One event in each LGA would be held on a weekday and the other on the weekend. Weekday events would be held in the morning concluding with lunch, while weekend events would be held on Saturday evenings concluding with supper. Events would be held in council run community centres or halls.

The project worker developed a timetable of events for the duration of the project taking into account school holidays and Easter holidays. Two events were planned per calendar month excluding the Easter period during April. Adjustments to the timetable were required due to having to reschedule some events.

COMMUNITY EVENT PROGRAM

The steering committee identified issues to be addressed in the community event program. These included:

- Addressing media responses and ensuring that the broader community realizes extremists do not represent all Muslims.
- Addressing shifts in community attitudes in Australia.
- Providing people from non-Muslim communities the opportunity to get together, to talk and to share experiences with people from Muslim communities and to meet each other face to face.
- Highlighting the diversity within the Muslim communities in Australia including that a significant number of Muslims are Australian-born.
- Distinguishing between ethnicity and religion, and traditions and Islamic beliefs. Particularly differentiating between Muslims and Islam.

SPEAKERS

The program included two speakers from the Muslim community, one male and one female speaker. The speakers addressed the issues as identified by the steering committee in two talks entitled:

- 1) *My Journey with Islam*
- 2) *Islam Today: how did it become so misunderstood?*

Each speaker spoke for twenty to thirty minutes followed by a thirty to forty minute discussion time; people attending were invited to ask questions of the speakers and to make comments.

ENTERTAINMENT

The event program included an Islamic art and craft exhibition; as well as an opportunity for participants to have their name written in Arabic calligraphy and to have henna body art. A photographic and fine art exhibition was included; however the fine artist and photographer were not able to attend all events. Child minding and games for children were provided at weekend events so that families were able to attend.

The events were concluded with a meal, giving participants the opportunity to socialise together in an informal setting. Initially the steering committee decided to provide a halal sausage sizzle and Middle-Eastern salads. This was not possible at all events due to catering facilities. Later a caterer was employed to provide halal food at each event.

PROMOTIONAL STRATEGY

A promotional leaflet and media release was developed by the project worker and endorsed by the steering committee and the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) prior to publication.

The promotional strategy included promoting through:

- the Migrant Information Centre's Mailing lists and newsletters
- local churches, noticeboards and newsletters
- local school newsletters
- local newspapers and community radio
- local government websites and newsletters
- ethnic media

EVALUATION

A feedback sheet for participants attending the community events was developed by the project worker and endorsed by the steering committee (*see appendix A*).

Feedback sheets for each community event were collated. An analysis of each community event was presented to the steering committee at monthly meetings, for further consideration.

Based on the analysis of the feedback by the steering committee, changes to the program were made where necessary.

SCHOOL PROGRAM DELIVERY MODEL

PLANNING

Three schools from each LGA (1 State Primary School, 1 State Secondary School and 1 Independent school) were invited to participate in the project. Schools that had supported the funding submission were invited to participate in the program and other schools were selected by the steering committee at the initial committee meeting.

The steering committee representative from the Department of Education advised that the project slotted effectively into the school curriculum under the Civics and Citizenship, Discovering Democracy component of the Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE) curriculum at primary school level and at secondary school level within the English Issues Studies curriculum.

A letter and project brief was sent to the school Principal of each selected school in November 2003, inviting them to meet with the project worker to discuss the project further. This was done in order to give schools the opportunity to plan for the upcoming year.

SCHOOL PROGRAM

Schools were given the opportunity to choose from three program opportunities.

- 1) An education session with students
- 2) A professional development session for staff
- 3) An information session for parents

Each session ran for approximately 1 hour. A speaker from Young Muslims of Australia or the Islamic Council of Victoria facilitated the sessions. Each program was tailored to meet the needs of the school, based on discussions with the project worker and school staff.

Examples of the session outlines are included below:

PRIMARY SCHOOL PRESENTATION OUTLINE:

Each primary school session was divided into three sections. The first section explored values, the second section explored tolerance and the third section explored Islam.

1. What are values?
Where do our values come from?
Are our values different?
2. How are our values reflected through our outward appearances? (Dress ups)
How do we deal with difference?
Respecting differences.
3. Children ask questions on Islam.

The facilitator began by exploring values with the children in the grade. Children were asked what they understood values to be. Some examples of values were given and the children were asked to explain what they understood them to mean.

The children were asked to identify where their values came from, who influenced them, for example: teachers, friends, parents and TV. The class discussed whether we all shared the same values and how our values differ.

The facilitator discussed with the class how our values are reflected in the way we present ourselves and the way we dress. The class discussed how sometimes people make assumptions about other people based on the way they look or dress. The facilitator gave examples of how people have treated her, the children were asked to identify the assumptions people had made, for example: that she does not speak English.

Three volunteers from the grade were asked to share something about themselves, their favourite food, music and TV program. They were then taken out of the class in turn to dress up in a football scarf, a sari or hijab. The class discussed their responses to what each child was wearing. The children discussed whether changing the outward appearance of their classmate had changed the things about their classmate.

The facilitator discussed with the children why sometimes things that are different to what we do or belief seems wrong or strange. The children were asked what they could do when they meet a person who is from a different culture. Some suggestions were to ask them about their culture and not to judge people based on your first impression of their culture.

The facilitator invited the children to ask her any questions about Islam or herself. Some examples of questions that were asked: Where are you from? How long have you lived in Australia, Why do you wear the hijab? Do boys have to wear anything different? Can girls play sports?

SECONDARY SCHOOL PRESENTATION OUTLINE

Below is an outline of a session held with year 8 history students: The session was divided into three sections.

1. History – based on perceptions, cannot be without bias
2. Values – looking at our values and how they are influenced
3. Islam – Dispelling misconceptions

The facilitator explored with the students the fact that written history is often biased. The Enemies and heroes of war are often portrayed in History. These portrayals are based on the ideology of the historian. In some countries history books are being rewritten where there has been change in Government and ideology.

The facilitator discussed value systems with the students. The students were asked to give examples of values, and to explain them to the class. The facilitator asked the students to identify where their values come from, and who influences them, for example: friends family, parents, teachers and the media.

The students were asked to give their immediate thoughts when they heard the word Muslim. Examples of thoughts given were: peace, terrorism, fundamentalists and oppression. Then the facilitator asked students to write true or false to five statements about Islam and Muslims.

1. All Muslims are Arabs
2. Muslim women are oppressed.
3. Muslims are wealthy
4. Muslims fast
5. Muslims do not follow football.

Each statement was then discussed in turn with the students. Students were then invited to ask the facilitator questions about herself and her faith.

EVALUATION

Feedback sheets were developed for students and teachers who participated in the project, one sheet for primary schools and another for secondary schools (*see appendix B*)

Feedback sheets from the school sessions were collated. An analysis of the feedback for each school session was presented to the steering committee for further consideration.

COMMUNITY EVENTS KEY FINDINGS

METHODOLOGY

A Feedback sheet for participants attending the community events (*see appendix A*), was developed by the project worker and endorsed by the steering committee.

Feedback sheets for each community event were collated. An analysis of each community event and school session was presented to the steering committee at monthly meetings, for further consideration.

INTRODUCTION

Nine out of the ten community events planned by the steering committee were held as part of the project. Participants were asked to complete feedback sheets at each community event.

PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

In the feedback sheet participants were asked to identify their age gender and religion. The following statistics are taken from the analysis of the completed feedback sheets. (*Tables 1, 2 and 3 of appendix C*)

- The average numbers of people in attendance at each event was approximately seventy (*table 1*).
- On average 50% of participants completed feedback sheets (*table 1*).
- 80% or more of participants, at each event were female (*table 1*).
- 82% were above the age of forty (*table 2*).
- 23% of attendants were 60 – 69 years of age (*table 2*).
- In general more young people attended weekend events (*table 2*).
- The majority of people who attended the events identified themselves as Christians (*table 3*).
- Muslims were the second highest identified group (*table 3*).
- The higher number of Muslims at events in Mount Waverley, Mulgrave and Rowville were contributed to the larger numbers of Muslims who reside in these suburbs, as well as the close proximity of the Lysterfield Mosque (*table 3*).
- In general more men attended weekend events (*table 1*).
- The majority of participants at each community event lived within the surrounding suburbs (*data obtained from the mailing list registration at each event*).
- It must be noted that in some cases participants travelled from other Regions of Melbourne to attend the events (*data obtained from the mailing list registration at each event*).

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROMOTIONAL STRATEGY

In the feedback sheet, participants were asked to identify how they found out about the event (*see appendix C, Table 4*).

- In the majority of cases, the most effective way of promoting each community event was through local church groups, word of mouth and the local media.
- Promotion through the local media had a significant impact on the number of participants at some events. For example 47.5% of participants attending the event at Keystone Hall in Croydon and 41% of participants attending the event at Maroondah Federation Estate in Ringwood identified the local media as how they found out about the event. It should be noted that a good rapport with the local journalist in this LGA contributed to the success of the media coverage. In other areas where the media coverage was not as successful, the numbers of participants were significantly lower.
- Both events in the City of Knox recorded higher numbers of participants than events held in other LGAs. This can be contributed to the high level of support from the Knox Interfaith Network members on the steering committee who actively promoted the events within their local networks.
- Other means of promotion identified by participants were schools, community centres, neighbourhood houses, libraries and the Victoria Police amongst others.

PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION

In the feedback sheet participants were asked about their impressions of the event (*see appendix C table 5, 6, 7 and 8*).

- Overall the majority of participants were “pleased” with the event.
- Over 80% of participants were “pleased” with the event as a way of learning about Islam.
- In most cases 90% of the participants were “pleased” with the speakers.

I was impressed by the quality and openness of both speakers.

Clear, well informed speakers who gave a splendid explanation of Islam and how Muslims live their faith in our community.

- The participants attending the Warrandyte event were less satisfied with the event. 17% stated they were disappointed and only 78% were “pleased” with the speakers. This can be attributed to the venue not being suitable, by not being prepared, leading to a lengthy delay in the event commencing and due to the poor acoustics because no PA system was available.

Very poorly planned event: late starting, inaudible speakers as no P.A. in an unsuitable, reflective environment.

- More than 40% of participants at each event responded that the event changed their understanding of Islam.

Yes, firstly I had the wrong concept of Islam as a religion, since attending this forum on understanding with Muslim speaker - it has helped me cope with the fear of what has been happening in relation to the present war in Iraq.

Interesting to hear from young Australian Muslims - helping to clarify the difference between religion and spirituality and the abuse of Islam for political purposes.

It made me start to view the ideas of Islam in a different light definitely in reference to women's rights and the actual beliefs of Islamic people.

It was the personal approach that enabled a true understanding as against media misinformation.

- Less than 37% of participants responded that the event did not change their understanding. In most cases this can either be attributed to the fact that they were Muslims themselves or that they already had an understanding of Islam.

I already know that Islam does not promote or condone terrorism. Religion teaches love and respect for one another. It is the people or the radical groups who are to be blamed for today's events.

As a Muslim I already understand and share the understanding.

- Several participants responded that they felt there was a need for similar events in the future and in other regions.

More of this type of function can only improve understanding and tolerance between people. Thank you for this opportunity – it was most enjoyable and I would like to attend future sessions.

More dialogue opportunities are needed.

I feel it is most important to hold many of these information sessions to counter wrong perceptions of engrained violence, which is unfortunately equated with the Muslim.

The concept is excellent but could be expanded in the far Eastern suburbs i.e. Berwick/Narre Warren area.

I think it's great and I think they should do this sort of thing in the Northern and Western suburbs as well.

- Many participants found the discussion time and the sharing of a meal pertinent to the success of the event.

Enjoyed the time afterwards sharing with Muslims, eating and chatting.

Found peoples comments very interesting.

This was an informative and encouraging time as people were able to express their views and seek clarification.

Small enough gathering for people to feel comfortable asking questions. Well hosted. Able, informed speakers & audience seemed genuinely interested in dialogue.

I enjoyed particularly the company of the girls, the talks and the very delicious food.

INTRODUCTION

During the course of the project major issues in regards to the community events were identified by the steering committee. These were the cost involved in holding the community events, coordination of volunteer speakers, reaching the target audience, the promotion of events by local media, measuring community impact, and the issue of religious celebrations in preschools.

1. COST OF EVENT

The cost of hiring suitable venues was above the cost estimated, particularly those events booked on weekends, as venue costs for weekends are based on a higher rate than weekdays. Local councils were approached when possible to subsidize the venue costs. In addition, the speakers, the henna body artist and the calligrapher also required payment; this was not estimated in the initial costing of the events. However their presence contributed to the overall success of the program.

Initially the steering committee decided to provide a halal sausage sizzle and Middle-Eastern salads at each event. Volunteers from the steering committee and their networks would assist with the sausage sizzle and the serving of the food at each event. However this was not possible at all events due to catering facilities at the venues and the availability of volunteers at each event. The sausage sizzle required a lot of time and commitment from volunteers. Later a caterer was employed to provide halal food at each event. This increased the cost of catering for each event. Nevertheless the lunch was an essential component of the community event allowing informal discussion and an opportunity to socialise.

2. COORDINATION OF VOLUNTEER SPEAKERS

On evaluation of the project the steering committee identified that there was a need for a coordinated group of volunteer speakers who have undergone specific training to ensure their approach to their target audience is appropriate and where speakers are trained to be sensitive in their use of language in meeting the level of understanding of their target audience. During the course of the project the steering group continually evaluated the community events in regards to whether the speakers were delivering their message so that the issues identified in the initial project planning were being addressed. This process was invaluable in achieving the project's aims and objectives. By establishing an on-going coordinated core of volunteer speakers the Islamic Council of Victoria, the Young Muslims of Australia and other Muslim organisations would be able to ensure accountability of the speakers, whereby the speakers will be accredited in speaking publicly on these issues. This would also provide a process of quality control. The steering committee believe that the time and commitment of volunteers from these organizations must be acknowledged, through coordination volunteers ought to be compensated for any costs that they may incur for example in preparation of materials, travel expenses and child care.

3. REACHING THE TARGET AUDIENCE

Through the course of the project it was identified that to some extent the project was "Preaching to the converted", the steering committee acknowledge that in promoting such events often only interested people who are tolerant of other faiths and cultures are likely to attend these events. It must be noted though that through the analysis of the

feedback of the events more 40 per cent of the participants expressed a change in their understanding of Islam. The steering committee also believe that through raising awareness within the broader community of the issues this would encourage people to recognise prejudice and therefore to speak out against intolerance.

4. IMPACT OF THE PROJECT ON THE COMMUNITY

The steering group recognize difficulty in measuring the impact of the project on the wider community. Anecdotal evidences from the Muslim community in the city of Knox showed that community links had been established between the Muslim community and the Victoria Police. The presence of Victoria Police at the Rowville community event, showing their support for Muslims in their community, had had an impact on the Muslims attending the event. Muslims attending the event in return showed their support by attending the police open day in Rowville.

The Migrant Information Centre is involved in another project in the City of Knox looking at the needs of the Muslim community in that region. To launch the project a My Dress, My Image, My Choice community event was held in Rowville, this event was promoted through the *Communities Together* community events and mailing lists. Over 200 women attended this event. A steering committee was established for this project, with some members of the *Communities Together* steering committee sitting on the Knox project committee as well.

5. DEFFERENTIATING BETWEEN MUSLIMS AND ISLAM

During the course of the project the steering committee identified that there was an important need for the speakers to differentiate between Muslims and Islam in promoting harmony and understanding, many participants at the community events sought clarification on this point. Like many other religions one can be a Muslim but not practise Islam. Islam is the religion, while a Muslim is a person who identifies with the Islam as a faith. In light of recent world events and the impact these events have had on the Muslim community highlighting this important difference is essential in promoting harmony and understanding.

6. RELIGIOUS CELEBRATIONS IN PRESCHOOLS

It was identified at a number of community events that the wider community was concerned about changes to celebrations of religious events in preschools, particularly Christmas celebrations. A number of people commented that Preschools were no longer allowing children to sing Christmas carols and hold Nativity plays. The assumption by many participants was that this was a government directive driven by Muslims and other non-Christian religions influencing government.

The project worker contacted the Department of Human Services, Children Services to ascertain what the position is regarding this issue. The project worker was informed that preschools are able to celebrate religious holidays and that the decision is made by the committee of management which is comprised of parents and is based on the ethnic composition of the preschool.

Discussions with Muslim families indicated that they did not object to the celebration of Christmas in preschools and schools as long as this was identified as a Christian celebration and that other religious celebrations reflecting the ethnicity of the children who attended the preschools was recognized as well.

It has been identified that there is misconception amongst the broader community in regards to the celebration of Christmas in Preschools. This could possibly be attributed

to the Media coverage some preschools have received in deciding not to celebrate Christmas.

7. LOCAL MEDIA

Promotion through the local media had a significant impact on the number of participants at some events. However Media coverage for the events in some LGAs was sporadic, often the events were published with insufficient lead-up time and without full event details. In one case the local media worked against the objectives of the project (*See case study*).

Case Study

A person attending the event held at the Maroondah Federation Estate in Ringwood brought a newspaper clipping of an article published in a local paper. The article concerned the removal of bacon from the menu of the local Kentucky Fried Chicken store. Their comment was that they were no longer able to purchase a meal containing bacon from this store therefore limiting their choice. The person's question was why should Kentucky Fried Chicken change their menu to cater for the needs of Muslims? The person had travelled a fair distance to attend the event to discuss this issue.

Unfortunately the persons comments were met with outrage from a number of non-Muslim participants at the event, many participants verbally expressed outrage for the comments. The speakers at the time were quite taken by the reaction of the audience and answered the question to the best of their ability.

On reflection the person's question was not answered effectively enough to diffuse the situation. Unfortunately the local media picked up on this particular issue and published an article the next week. The person felt humiliated and was infuriated contacting the local journalist making a complaint about the article. In this case due to the chain of events, instead of the individual changing their understanding of Islam for the better, the opposite occurred, perhaps even deepening their prejudices to Muslims.

CONCLUSION

The project aim to address racism and to increase inter-faith understanding of Islam was successfully achieved through the delivery of nine community events. One event in Doncaster, in the City of Manningham was cancelled due to low registration numbers. A possible explanation for this could be that the Migrant Information Centre had held similar events such as "My Dress, My Image, My choice" and the Interfaith function, "My Beliefs, My Values, My Family" within the past twelve to six months. In addition there was no interfaith network in the City of Manningham to assist with the promotion of the event. One event in Mulgrave was rescheduled due to low registration numbers. This was attributed to the number of other local events being held in the area on the same day. Overall the majority of participants were satisfied with the event as a way of learning about Islam. The profile of participants who attended the events were that of mostly female, Christians, over the age of forty, living locally, a small number of participants travelled from other Regions to attend.

A combination of promotional strategies seemed most effective when promoting the community events, in most cases participants found out about the event through their local church, the local media and through word of mouth. The Knox Interfaith Network played an integral role in the promotion of the community events. Both the events held in the City of Knox had significantly higher numbers than other LGAs. The promotion of the community events was more successful in the local government areas of Knox,

Maroondah and Monash where the steering committee had representation from local church groups and Interfaith Networks.

Many participants who attended the events expressed a wish for further opportunities to socialise with people of different faiths and culture. People who had travelled from outside of region in particular, the Greater Dandenong Region expressed interest in holding similar events in their regions.

During the course of the project four issues arose relating to the delivery of the community event model: the cost of the event, reaching the target audience, differentiating between Muslims and Islam and the coverage of the events by local media. Other issue identified were the coordination of volunteer speakers, measuring the impact of the project on the community, and the celebration of religious holidays in preschools.

Though the impact on the wider community is difficult to measure, links between Muslims and Non-Muslims in the community have been successfully established.

SCHOOL PROGRAM KEY FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

Only six schools out of the fifteen schools approached participated in the project as, nine schools withdrew from the project. As a result ten of the fifteen sessions planned for the project were held with the six participating schools. In the project submission it was planned to offer schools a choice of three program options of these options: two teachers training sessions and eight student sessions were held. No schools asked for sessions with parents.

Type of school	Number of schools	Number of Sessions
Primary	three	5
Secondary	two	3
Independent	one	2

The response was very positive from the participating schools. Many of these schools requested further sessions, and where possible this was accommodated.

TEACHER TRAINING SESSIONS

Two schools held teachers' training sessions, Ringwood Secondary College and Milgate Primary School. The two schools were very different in the delivery of the training; Milgate Primary School made it compulsory for all teachers to attend the training session, whereas teachers who wanted to learn more about Islam attended the session at Ringwood Secondary School. This may be attributed to Milgate Primary School having a significant number of Muslim children whereas at Ringwood Secondary College had few students identify themselves as Muslim.

- 26 teachers from Milgate Primary School and 7 teachers from Ringwood Secondary College attended the training session.
- 61.5% of the teachers from Milgate Primary School found the session to be complete in regards to coverage of topic, while 38.5% found it adequate.
- 60% of the teachers from Ringwood Secondary College found the session to be complete.
- 50% of the teachers from both schools found the information "very relevant", while 50% found the information "relevant", none found the information "irrelevant."
- 92.7% of teachers from Milgate Primary School found that the session would benefit them in their role/workplace.
- 71.4% of teachers from Ringwood Secondary College found that the session would benefit them in their role/workplace.

Better understanding of the religion, cultural beliefs, so that I can ensure I am inclusive in my classroom.

Understanding more about the different religious beliefs is important to be able to develop genuine respect and compromises within our own culture.

I am currently teaching prep and I believe I will use it in general, (not just about Muslim children) to create more acceptance of difference i.e. speak about holidays, food, beliefs etc.

- 42.3% of the teachers from Milgate Primary School rated the quality of the presentation as “excellent” while 57.7% rated the presentation as “good” to “very good”.
- 71.5% of the teachers from Ringwood Secondary School rated the quality of the presentation as “excellent” while 28.5% rated the presentation as “very good”.

Very personable presenter. Clear information.

Opportunities to ask questions.

Addressing the individual needs i.e. ideas for swimming, camp etc. Confidence and passion of speaker.

- There were no negative features identified by teachers for both presentations.
- 42.3% of the teachers from Milgate Primary School rated the overall presentation as “extremely valuable” while 57.7% rated the overall presentation “valuable” to “very valuable.”
- 48.9% of the teachers from Ringwood Secondary College rated the overall presentation as “extremely valuable” while 57.1% rated the overall presentation as “very valuable”.

STUDENT SESSIONS

A number of different student sessions were held. Below is a table of schools who participated in the program, showing the number of sessions held at each school and the grade level with which the sessions were held.

School	Grade level	Number of Sessions
Parkhill Primary School	grades 5/6	three
Nunawading Primary	Grades 5/6	one
Doncaster Secondary school	Year 8 history class	one
Ringwood Secondary College	All levels- lunchtime	one
Lady of Sion College	Year 9/10	two

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Four sessions were held with grade five and six children from two different primary schools. Primary school students were asked to write two things that they had learnt in the session. Below are some of the student’s comments:

That some people live the same as us and look different, so we shouldn’t judge them.

Not to tease or make fun of other people from other countries that wear different clothes

Muslims have to pray five times a day.

Don't be embarrassed to ask people questions about their culture.

The [Muslim] women are not allowed to show their body figure.

That the headpieces that Muslim woman wears is for wearing outside, they do not have to wear it inside the house.

There can be Chinese Muslims as well. That people who are Muslim don't necessarily come from one particular country they can be from everywhere.

About different cultures and values.

Do not assume that they cannot speak English because of what they wear.

I learnt in today's session different things about my classmates.

The student's indicated that they had learnt about different cultures and values. They learnt how to be tolerant of other cultures. They also indicated that they had learnt about Muslims and their customs.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Four sessions were held with secondary students from three different secondary schools. Secondary school students were asked to complete feedback sheets asking students about their impressions of the session (*appendix B*).

- Overall the majority of students were “pleased” with the session (*appendix C table 9*).
- Over 87% of students were “pleased” with the session as a way of learning about Islam (*table 10*).
- Over 80% of students were “pleased” with the speaker (*table 11*).

Sherene was fantastic, she's a great teacher – she really opened my eyes.

I thought it was very good and funny. The speaker was great and it made me think a lot about September 11th and racism.

I would like to say that your speaker was absolutely fantastic and she really fascinated me with her knowledge.

- 69.5% of students at Doncaster Secondary College, 81.25% of students at Ringwood Secondary College and 76.6% of students at the Lady of Sion responded that the session changed their understanding of Islam.

I knew very little beforehand except for the media and was pleased to hear first hand we all want the same outcomes.

I knew very little before this session except for what I learnt in Indonesian classes. It was great to learn more about it.

It helped me realise that Muslims are so much like Australians and I wish that ignorant Australians could see that!! I really respect all of Muslim's beliefs now.

I learnt that many people have misconceptions about Muslims and that if you look at history from different views, the “hero” and the “villain” are different.

It shows there is more to Muslims than the media portrays them as.

- 12.5% of students at Ringwood Secondary College, 16.6% of students at the Lady of Sion College and 30.4% of students from Doncaster Secondary College responded that the session did not change their understanding of Islam (*table 12*).

Today did not change my understanding of Muslims in Australia because I was always supportive of the Muslims and their religion.

Not really, because I already knew a lot of the stuff and never felt against other people's religions or cultures, but it was still a good lesson.

SCHOOL PROGRAM ISSUES ARISING

ENGAGING SCHOOLS

The project officer made many attempts to engage schools throughout the duration of the project. One of the issues was establishing which member of staff the information had been passed onto. Often the information had been passed onto staff members such as English as a Second Language coordinators and welfare coordinators who were not in a position to arrange sessions in their class time.

Most of the schools who withdrew from the project stated that their curriculum was too full to fit a project such as this in at the time. Many of these schools had supported the project and expressed interest in participating in the project when the funding for the project was submitted.

One primary school withdrew stating that the nature of the program had caused concern amongst staff members but did not offer any further explanation when the project officer inquired what these concerns were. Two independent schools stated that their school was already addressing the aims and objectives of the project.

In some cases teachers from schools that had been approached to participate in the project contacted the Migrant Information Centre seeking assistance in identifying Muslim speakers. These teachers were unaware that their school had been invited to participate in the project, evidence that staff members were not receiving the information sent by the project officer. In the case of the Lady of Sion College, the school had not been approached. A teacher had seen the *Communities Together* event promoted in the local paper and contacted the Migrant Information Centre requesting Muslim speakers to attend the school for two sessions with year nine and ten students.

CONCLUSION

Six schools participated in the project. A total of ten sessions, two teachers training sessions and eight student sessions were held. The overall response from participating schools was very positive with many of the schools requesting further sessions, and where possible this was accommodated.

Engaging schools in the program was identified as an issue during the course of the project, with many schools stating that their curriculum was too full to fit a project such as this in at the time. Anecdotal evidence from the Muslim community living in the five identified LGAs, in particular, the City of Knox supported the need for further education in the schools to address negative stereotypes and in meeting the needs of the Muslim students.

The Islamic Council of Victoria, Young Muslims of Australia and the Migrant Information Centre have expressed interest in continuing to pursue this objective.

CONCLUSIONS

The project aims to address negative stereotypes and to increase inter-faith understanding of Islam were successfully achieved through the delivery of nine community events and a total of ten school sessions: two teachers training sessions and eight student sessions.

Overall the majority of participants were satisfied with the events as away of learning about Islam, with over 40% of participants attending community events expressing a change in their understanding of Islam. Overall the response from participating schools was very positive with many of the schools requesting further sessions.

A combination of promotional strategies seemed the most effective when promoting the community events, in most cases participants found out about the event through their local church, the local media and through word of mouth. The Knox Interfaith Network in particular played an integral role in the promotion of the events, with a significantly higher number of participants in attendance at both the community events held in the City of Knox. The promotion of the community events was more successful in the local government areas of Knox, Maroondah and Monash where the steering committee had representation from local church groups and Interfaith Networks.

Many participants attending the events expressed an interest in further opportunities to socialise with people of different faiths and culture. Participants from other regions, in particular the Greater Dandenong region, expressed an interest in holding similar events in their region

During the course of the project four issues arose relating to the delivery of the community event model, these being: the cost involved in holding the events, difficulty in reaching the target audience, the importance of differentiating between Muslims and Islam and the coverage of the events by local media. Other issue identified were the coordination of volunteer speakers, measuring the impact of the project on the community, and the celebration of religious holidays in preschools. Engaging schools in the program was another identified issue. Many schools selected stated that their curriculum was too full to fit a project such as this in at the time

Anecdotal evidence from the Muslim community living in the five identified LGAs, in particular, the City of Knox support the need for further education in the schools to address negative stereotypes and in meeting the needs of the Muslim students.

Links between Muslims and Non-Muslims in the community were successfully established through the steering committee, with the Islamic Council of Victoria keen to adopt the *Communities Together* event model in the future and in continuing to pursue education within the schools.

APPENDECIES

COMMUNITIES TOGETHER
Event Feedback Sheet

*PLEASE TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO PROVIDE COMMENTS AND
FEEDBACK ABOUT TODAY'S EVENT.*

Q1 Please tick the box (✓) that best indicates your age.

Less than 20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	50 – 59 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
20 – 29 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	60 – 69 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
30 – 39 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	70 years or more	<input type="checkbox"/>
40 – 49 years	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Q2 What is your gender?

Male Female

Q3 Please tick the box (✓) that best indicates your religious background.

Muslim	<input type="checkbox"/>	Buddhist	<input type="checkbox"/>
Christian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hindu	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jewish	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Q4 Please circle the picture that best represents your impression of today's event.



Pleased

Neither pleased nor disappointed

Disappointed

Q5 Please circle the picture that indicates your overall impression of the event as a way of learning about Islamic culture.



Pleased

Neither pleased nor disappointed

Disappointed

Q6 Please circle the picture that best represents your overall impression of the speakers.



Pleased

Neither pleased nor disappointed

Disappointed

Q7 Did today's event change your understanding of Muslims in Australia?

Yes No

Please provide reasons for your response

.....
.....
.....

Q8 Please tick (✓) the box that represents how you found out about the event.

Notice mailed to your home	<input type="checkbox"/>	Word of mouth	<input type="checkbox"/>
Through a church/club you attend	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local media	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q9 Please tick (✓) the box that best describes the venue (you can tick more than one box).

Convenient location	<input type="checkbox"/>	Good amenities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comfortable	<input type="checkbox"/>	Adequate parking	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accessibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q10 Were you satisfied with the time and the day of the event? Yes No

If not what day of the week and time would you recommend?

Q11 Any further comments you wish to make?

.....
.....
.....
.....

***THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION AND PARTICIPATION IN OUR
EVENT***

COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

Secondary School Feedback Sheet

PLEASE TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO PROVIDE COMMENTS AND FEEDBACK ABOUT TODAY'S EVENT

Q1 Please circle the picture that best represents your impression of today's session.



Pleased

Neither pleased nor disappointed

Disappointed

Q2 Please circle the picture that indicates your overall impression of the session as a way of learning about Islamic culture.



Pleased

Neither pleased nor disappointed

Disappointed

Q3 Please circle the picture that best represents your overall impression of the speaker.



Pleased

Neither pleased nor disappointed

Disappointed

Q4 Did today's event change your understanding of Muslims in Australia? Yes No

Please provide reasons for your response

.....
.....
.....

Q5 Any further comments you wish to make.

.....
.....
.....
.....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION AND PARTICIPATION IN OUR SESSION

Table 1: Gender of participants

Venue	LGA	Date	+ Number of people	completed feedback sheets	Females	Males
Knox Community Arts Centre, Bayswater	Knox	7 Feb	100	48	-	-
Maroondah Federation Estate, Ringwood	Maroondah	24 Feb	100	48	41	7
Mount Waverly Community Centre	Monash	29 Mar	70	42	35	7
Warrandyte Community Centre, Warrandyte	Manningham	29 Apr	70	41	33	8
Willis Room, Whitehorse Centre, Nunawading	Whitehorse	3 Jun	50	31	26	5
Keystone Hall, Croydon	Maroondah	26 Jun	60	40	32	8
Burgess Family Centre, Box Hill	Whitehorse	3 Jul	70	38	26	12
*Rowville Community Centre	Knox	15 Jul	120	59	44	13
Mulgrave Community Centre	Monash	31 Jul	70	40	24	16

Table 2: Age of participants

Venue	LGA	Date	Less than 20 yrs	20 – 29 yrs	30-39 yrs	40-49 yrs	50-59 yrs	60-69 yrs	Over 70 yrs
Knox Community Arts Centre, Bayswater	Knox	7 Feb	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Maroondah Federation Estate, Ringwood	Maroondah	24 Feb	0	3	5	11	11	8	10
Mount Waverly Community Centre	Monash	29 Mar	0	2	5	10	9	15	4
Warrandyte Community Centre	Manningham	29 Apr	2	0	5	5	7	14	12
Willis Room, Whitehorse Centre, Nunawading	Whitehorse	3 Jun	0	0	2	4	8	7	12
Keystone Hall, Croydon	Maroondah	26 Jun	1	4	2	6	3	16	8
Burgess Family Centre, Box Hill	Whitehorse	3 Jul	3	5	2	7	6	8	7
Rowville Community Centre	Knox	15 Jul	0	4	12	8	15	10	11
Mulgrave Community Centre	Monash	31 Jul	1	2	4	7	13	4	9

Table 3: Religious background of participants

Venue	LGA	Date	completed feedback sheets	Muslim	Christian	Jewish	Buddhist	Hindu	Other
Knox Community Arts Centre, Bayswater	Knox	7 Feb	48	-	-	-	-	-	-
Maroondah Federation Estate, Ringwood	Maroondah	24 Feb	48	4	35	0	1	0	8
Mount Waverly Community Centre	Monash	29 Mar	42	18	22	3	0	0	3
Warrandyte Community Centre	Manningham	29 Apr	41	4	37	1	0	0	3
Willis Room, Whitehorse Centre, Nunawading	Whitehorse	3 Jun	31	8	19	0	3	3	0
Keystone Hall, Croydon	Maroondah	26 Jun	40	8	29	1	0	0	1
Burgess Family Centre, Box Hill	Whitehorse	3 Jul	38	2	28	1	1	0	6
Rowville Community Centre	Knox	15 Jul	59	15	37	0	0	1	5
Mulgrave Community Centre	Monash	31 Jul	40	15	23	0	0	0	2

Table 4: How Participants found out about the event

Venue	LGA	Date	+ Number of people	Completed feedback sheets	Mailed Notice	Word of mouth	Church or Club	Local media	Other
Knox Community Arts Centre, Bayswater	Knox	7 Feb	100	48	-	-	-	-	-
Maroondah Federation Estate, Ringwood	Maroondah	24 Feb	100	48	4	10	10	20	4
Mount Waverly Community Centre	Monash	29 Mar	70	42	4	14	9	9	6
Warrandyte Community Centre	Manningham	29 Apr	70	41	4	10	14	12	5
Willis Room, Whitehorse Centre, Nunawading	Whitehorse	3 Jun	50	31	3	16	14	2	2
Keystone Hall, Croydon	Maroondah	26 Jun	60	40	3	9	5	19	2
Burgess Family Centre, Box Hill	Whitehorse	3 Jul	70	38	3	14	10	10	0
Rowville Community Centre	Knox	15 Jul	120	59	4	13	21	12	11
Mulgrave Community Centre	Monash	31 Jul	70	40	5	17	9	4	4

-Indicates figures are not available. Q8 was not included in the initial feedback sheet.

+The number of actual participants is based on the number of participants that registered prior the event.

Table 5: Participants Overall Impressions of the Event

Venue	LGA	Date	+ Number of people	Completed feedback sheets	Pleased	Neither pleased or disappointed	Disappointed
Knox Community Arts Centre, Bayswater	Knox	7 Feb	100	48	41	7	0
Maroondah Federation Estate, Ringwood	Maroondah	24 Feb	100	48	44	4	0
Mount Waverly Community Centre	Monash	29 Mar	70	42	41	1	0
Warrandyte Community Centre	Manningham	29 Apr	70	41	31	3	7
Willis Room, Whitehorse Centre, Nunawading	Whitehorse	3 Jun	50	31	28	2	1
Keystone Hall, Croydon	Maroondah	26 Jun	60	40	36	4	0
Burgess Family Centre, Box Hill	Whitehorse	3 Jul	70	38	38	0	0
Rowville Community Centre	Knox	15 Jul	120	59	55	3	1
Mulgrave Community Centre	Monash	31 Jul	70	40	38	2	0

Table 6: Participants Impression of the Event as a Way of Learning about Islamic Culture

Venue	LGA	Date	+ Number of people	Completed feedback sheets	Pleased	Neither pleased or disappointed	Disappointed
Knox Community Arts Centre, Bayswater	Knox	7 Feb	100	48	41	5	2
Maroondah Federation Estate, Ringwood	Maroondah	24 Feb	100	48	42	6	0
Mount Waverly Community Centre	Monash	29 Mar	70	42	40	2	0
Warrandyte Community Centre	Manningham	29 Apr	70	41	34	2	5
Willis Room, Whitehorse Centre, Nunawading	Whitehorse	3 Jun	50	31	27	4	0
Keystone Hall, Croydon	Maroondah	26 Jun	60	40	34	6	0
Burgess Family Centre, Box Hill	Whitehorse	3 Jul	70	38	37	1	0
Rowville Community Centre	Knox	15 Jul	120	59	49	10	1
Mulgrave Community Centre	Monash	31 Jul	70	40	36	4	0

Table 7 Participants Impressions of the Speakers

Venue	LGA	Date	+ Number of people	Completed feedback sheets	Pleased	Neither pleased or disappointed	Disappointed
Knox Community Arts Centre, Bayswater	Knox	7 Feb	100	48	42	4	2
Maroondah Federation Estate, Ringwood	Maroondah	24 Feb	100	48	45	3	0
Mount Waverly Community Centre	Monash	29 Mar	70	42	40	2	0
Warrandyte Community Centre	Manningham	29 Apr	70	41	32	5	4
Willis Room, Whitehorse Centre, Nunawading	Whitehorse	3 Jun	50	31	28	3	0
Keystone Hall, Croydon	Maroondah	26 Jun	60	40	36	4	0
Burgess Family Centre, Box Hill	Whitehorse	3 Jul	70	38	38	0	0
Rowville Community Centre	Knox	15 Jul	120	59	56	3	0
Mulgrave Community Centre	Monash	31 Jul	70	40	35	4	1

Table 8: Did The Event Change Participants Understanding Of Islam?

Venue	LGA	Date	+ Number of people	Completed feedback sheets	Yes	No	No Response
Knox Community Arts Centre, Bayswater	Knox	7 Feb	100	48	21	18	9
Maroondah Federation Estate, Ringwood	Maroondah	24 Feb	100	48	28	6	14
Mount Waverly Community Centre	Monash	29 Mar	70	42	23	13	6
Warrandyte Community Centre	Manningham	29 Apr	70	41	25	12	4
Willis Room, Whitehorse Centre, Nunawading	Whitehorse	3 Jun	50	31	24	7	0
Keystone Hall, Croydon	Maroondah	26 Jun	60	40	17	9	14
Burgess Family Centre, Box Hill	Whitehorse	3 Jul	70	38	21	14	3
Rowville Community Centre	Knox	15 Jul	120	59	38	17	4
Mulgrave Community Centre	Monash	31 Jul	70	40	21	13	6

Table9: Students Overall Impressions of the Event

School	LGA	Date	Completed feedback sheets	Pleased	Neither pleased or disappointed	Disappointed
Ringwood Secondary College	Maroondah	15 Mar	16	12	4	0
Doncaster Secondary College	Manningham	24 May	23	21	2	0
Lady of Sion High School	Whitehorse	5 Aug	30	29	1	0

Table 10: students Impression of the Event as a Way of Learning about Islamic Culture

School	LGA	Date	Completed feedback sheets	Pleased	Neither pleased or disappointed	Disappointed
Ringwood Secondary College	Maroondah	15 Mar	16	14	2	0
Doncaster Secondary College	Manningham	24 May	23	21	2	0
Lady of Sion High School	Whitehorse	5 Aug	30	30	0	0

Table 11: Students Impressions of the Speakers

School	LGA	Date	Completed feedback sheets	Pleased	Neither pleased or disappointed	Disappointed
Ringwood Secondary College	Maroondah	15 Mar	16	13	3	0
Doncaster Secondary College	Manningham	24 May	23	21	2	0
Lady of Sion High School	Whitehorse	5 Aug	30	30	0	0

Table 12: Did The Event Change Participants Understanding Of Islam?

School	LGA	Date	Completed feedback sheets	Yes	No	No response
Ringwood Secondary College	Maroondah	15 Mar	16	13	2	1
Doncaster Secondary College	Manningham	24 May	23	16	7	0
Lady of Sion High School	Whitehorse	5 Aug	30	23	5	2