

Melaleuca Newsletter



August 2007

A tri-annual publication promoting community connections

Adieu to multilingual broadcasting

For 26 years many multilingual Territorians have been able to tune in to 104.1 Territory FM for weekly language programs in their mother tongue. For many, this hour a week has provided an essential link to the situation in their country of origin and assisted to connect those local multilingual communities.

A measure of the health of a democracy is the opportunities given to minority groups to have a voice in public life. Essential to this is that we are a multicultural, multilingual society with over 200 languages spoken across the country. In the NT, approximately 25% of the population is of a multilingual background, not including the Indigenous people.

The Multilingual Broadcasting Council of the Northern Territory (MBCNT) President Joe De Luca said he was told by 104.1 Territory FM that it may be necessary to audit multilingual program content for terrorist messages. He added that the station also imposed unrealistic obligations that would in effect require MBCNT to pay 20 times more than what they were already paying to retain their present air time slots.

MBCNT collectively refused to accept strict new guidelines requested by 104.1 Territory FM; involving a reduction from 25 to 16 hours per week, air time changed from 6-10pm to 10pm-12am, excepting Sundays 6pm-12am.

Mr De Luca said that it was not possible to cut 9 language programs when the community need was for an expansion of current programming, including the needs of people from refugee background.

MBCNT has been broadcasting at Territory FM 104.1, since the stations inception in 1981. A cooperative verbal, financial and scheduling agreement has been in place since this time.

To ensure the ongoing presence of MBCNT programming at the station, in a competitive marketplace, the multilingual management team suggested the relationship be formalised with a written agreement which, in the end, was never finalised.

MBCNT is funded by Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF). Around 75% of their annual funding goes directly to CDU, the balance is used to assist MBCNT volunteers to purchase materials and resources for their programs.

Until the end of programming which occurred on 29th of June, MBCNT was on air 25 hours a week with over 25 different language programs involving up to 300 volunteers every week, with at least one presenter having been on air since programming began in 1981.

While off air, the MBCNT team are exploring alternate avenues to get their important community service back on track.

Territory FM management was contacted in relation to this matter on a number of occasions but did not respond to requests for an interview or reply.

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Editorial

from the Director's desk

Welcome to the second edition of our newsletter. The first edition certainly was a real success and has helped to inform the refugee community, our volunteers and the general community about the latest news from the Melaleuca Refugee Centre.

We would like to specially welcome our first arrivals from Burma, both Karen and Burmese people and believe that with the help from our volunteers, the already existing Burmese community and other communities from refugee background they will settle in well.

In August we will have to say good-bye to Karen Chugg, the leader of Counselling Team. Karen's nine years of experience with the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture and Trauma prior to her time here at Melaleuca Refugee Centre has certainly benefited our counselling team.

The team has grown from two counsellors to a team of seven including Youth and Child focused counsellors. Due to Karen's knowledge and commitment the team has flourished and has become a very cohesive and well trained team. We are very sad to let Karen go.

It has been 10 years since Melaleuca Refugee Centre was first incorporated as Torture and Trauma Survivor Service NT. We are celebrating the 10th anniversary on 17 November.

We will be holding a symposium to showcase our work, talk about our experience and look at some broader issues around the refugee experience. We have started a history search and are collating past stories, photos, videos etc. If you have anything to contribute please contact Ben Garcia at Melaleuca Refugee Centre. Certainly a lot has happened in those 10 years.

News from the Committee

We had to say goodbye to another committee member: Tom Cowen who has left for Cairns. Tom's knowledge on legal issues will be greatly missed in the Committee.

We would like to welcome Natalie Gray onto the committee who is replacing Meredith Hansen with her knowledge on refugee health issues. Natalie is the medical officer responsible for refugee health screening.

Our Annual General Meeting will be held Tuesday 18 September. We extend an invitation to community members who want to join the Committee of Management or just want to become members of the Melaleuca Refugee Centre. Membership forms are available from Mie Mie at our office reception.

This Issue

Editorial responsibility: Nic Borgese
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Next Issue: December 2007
Special Issue: 10th Anniversary, November 2007
Write to nic.borgese@melaleuca.org.au with comments and feedback.

Congolese Independence

The Congolese community in Darwin is active in embracing the Australian way of life while maintaining links with their rich and intense culture. Last June the Congolese community pooled their resources to organise the very first Congolese Independence Day Party in Darwin. About 200 people gathered at the Cyprus Community Centre to celebrate this important day. John Kabalu, one of the organisers, said that the community was already looking forward to making Independence Day celebration an annual event. Aiming to be self-sufficient, next year's celebration promises to be more colourful and sensitive to the needs of people with young children.

Following is an excerpt of the key note address that preceded the Independence Day celebrations.

Late in the first century, Bantu-speaking peoples established themselves throughout Central Africa. By the 15th century, several kingdoms had developed in the area, including Kongo, Luba, Kuba and Lunda. During this period, until 1885 when the slave trade was abolished, coastal kingdoms often captured people from neighbouring areas for sale as slaves.

Between 1880-1910, the area was recognised as a personal territory of King Leopold II of Belgium, named the Congo Free State. The Congolese were regarded as forced labour during this time and brutally treated. It is estimated that as many as 10 million Congolese died during King Leopold's reign.

News of Leopold's atrocities was made public in Belgium in 1908, and in response, the Belgian Government took control of the colony and renamed it Belgian Congo in 1910. Working conditions improved, as did infrastructure and the availability of services such as primary education and healthcare.

In the early 1950s Belgium came under pressure to transform the Belgian Congo into a self-governing state. The Belgian government's response to this pressure was largely dismissive.

By early 1959, the Belgian authorities prohibited Congolese elite groups from meeting and this caused widespread rioting in Leopoldville from January 4-7. Subsequently, the Belgian government announced constitutional reforms intended to bring more Congolese into government, but only in an advisory capacity. They also indicated that the end result of the process would eventually be independence.

With this plan the Belgians hoped to satisfy the demands of the more moderate Congolese for inclusion in the political process while neutralising the more extreme Congolese nationalists with the promise of eventual independence. The end result was the opposite of what was intended. There was a surge of political activity, over fifty political parties were registered, nearly all of them based on tribal groups.

Nationalist demands grew more extreme as parties competed with each other. Faced with increasing instability, the Belgians held a "Roundtable Conference" in Brussels for the leaders of the different Congolese parties. The Belgians agreed to independence but tried to negotiate for a transitional period of three to four years. The Congolese insisted that independence be granted immediately and the most that they would concede was a few months. In the end it was agreed to hold elections in May with a transfer of power one month later in June.

The independent Republic of the Congo was declared on 30 June 1960. It has been 47 years since that declaration and we are happy to celebrate this event in Darwin.

Anti-Poverty Week

A series of events are being planned to raise awareness about poverty in Australia and around the world to coincide with Anti-Poverty Week, which runs from Sunday 14 to Saturday 20 October, and the UN's International Anti-Poverty Day on Wednesday 17. Events organisers in Darwin are planning to host a breakfast in Bennet Park. The breakfast will feature cultural performances, speakers and entertainment. This is a free event open to all members of the public.

The breakfast is not a fundraiser, food and beverages for the event have been donated by local suppliers. The aim of it is to raise awareness about the causes and consequences of poverty, homelessness and injustice.

Other events planned during Anti-Poverty Week include a Sleep Out Against Poverty and a walk in Katherine, market stalls in Palmerston, forums in Darwin and Alice Springs and a walk against poverty in Darwin.

The Darwin walk will start at 2.30pm on Sunday 14th in Mitchell Street and end at the Botanic Gardens followed by a family fun day and information sessions. We are inviting everyone to join us for this activity, which is also part of the YWCA Week Without Violence.

Anti-Poverty Week has been running for several years. Its main aim is to strengthen public understanding of the causes and consequences of poverty and hardship around the world and within Australia. It also encourages research, discussion and action on how to alleviate the severe hardship that more than a million Australians and billions of people around the world endure on a daily basis.

In the true spirit of generosity that typifies Australians, Anti-Poverty Week has been embraced with enthusiasm. Last year alone more than 400 organisations got behind the idea organising hundreds of events and mobilising thousands of people.

The NT-APW coordinating committee is calling on individuals and organisations to plan activities to raise awareness of poverty in poor countries and also in wealthier countries like Australia.

For more information or to add your support call Toni Vine Bromley 08 89275600 or visit the national website at: www.antipovertyweek.org.au.

Protecting basic rights?

In May, Charles Darwin University hosted a symposium on the question of a Bill of Rights for the Northern Territory. Australia is now the only democratic nation without a charter of human rights. A Bill of Rights does not guarantee that the basic human rights of all citizens are protected at all times, but it provides the mechanisms for checks and balances when governments draft new laws. In other words, any act of parliament must ensure that basic rights are respected in accordance to the human rights charter adopted by the State.

Opposition to a Bill of Rights dates back to the founding fathers of the Australian Constitution. Within the current political discourse opposition to a Bill of Rights is based on the notion that human rights are adequately protected through the rule of law and the democratic system. Nonetheless, legislations devised under the guise of the 'war on terror' threaten basic rights such as freedom of speech and privacy from government intrusion. In addition, opponents to a constitutionally entrenched Bill of Rights often claim that such legislations are too rigid and difficult to amend, as changes to the Constitution require public referenda; and they give too much power to the courts.

To this end Victoria and the ACT have developed ordinary statutory charters of human rights similar to those applied by the UK, Canada and New Zealand that allow governments and parliaments to make amendments according to the needs of the citizens.

Among the most vocal opponents for a Bill of Right in Australia is Professor of Law at the University of Queensland, James Allen. During the CDU Symposium Mr Allen presented a very entertaining but quite shallow position against the desirability of a Bill of Rights. Mr Allen based his entire argument on the view that citizens, having been endowed with the capacity to choose, will use the ballot box to elect or oust politicians who do not protect the basic rights of individuals in their community. This view shows to be out of touch with the reality of too many people in our society today.

Those who are most at risk to have their basic rights violated belong to the disadvantage sectors of Australian society, the homeless, children, the mentally ill, prisoners and racially discriminated individuals—all of whom do not have access to the political system. Moreover, recent changes to the Citizenship Act automatically exclude from the political process Mr Allen refers to all new residents of Australia for a minimum of four years.

Although the idea of human rights is often contested, there are morally bounding obligations that transcend culture, class, language, religion, sex, social, political and economic status that must stand against the abuse of human rights wherever they occur. If political structures do not offer the guarantee of protecting basic rights, where do people turn to?

This question was raised at the CDU Symposium. The answer from the panel of experts was that it is left to the civil society to ensure that individuals' basic rights are not violated. But who is the civil society, and what access to legal recourse does it have?

The civil society is you and me who form all manner of relationships based on community connections and networks, but have limited political authority. History and recent events have shown that without a Bill of Rights, which guarantees that the laws we agree to live under stand to scrutiny and respect the basic human rights of all, the chances of draconian and abusive power of governments increases.

What do you think?

Thanks!

Melaluca Health Team would like to give our warmest thanks to all of the people who participated in the recent fundraiser to raise money for our 'Healthy Food Workshops' for newly arrived families.

We thank 'Faa Muziq', The Liberian Cultural Group and Prince Jackson for their fantastic performances on the night, after which the documentary 'Ayen's Cooking School for African Men' was screened to much applause.

The scrumptious and healthy food prepared by Melaluca staff and friends was also very much appreciated and enjoyed by all.

As a result of this fundraiser, we have been able to begin running 'Healthy Food Workshops' in the school holidays. The workshops have been a lot of fun with interactive cooking demonstrations, trying of new foods and learning about Australian nutritional guidelines.

All participants have loved the workshops and the food and would like to learn more. More workshops will be planned for the next school holidays. Stay tuned for more information.



In the picture: Nothing but fun at 'Health Team Workshops'!

Congolese Cooking Class

Darwin's mix of peoples and cultures is reflected in the gastronomic delights on offer in the city's many restaurants and market stalls. With each emerging community the richness and diversity of foods increases to tantalise the taste buds of Territorians.

With an eagerness for new tastes, there is a growing interest in learning different ways of cooking. Fatuma Tambwe, a Congolese woman now living in Darwin found plenty of interest among her acquaintances to learn about Congolese food.

Fatuma spoke to *Cath Archer*.

Q: Where did the idea come from to have a Congolese cooking class?

F.T: I got the idea from my friend Megan. We would always cook African food together, and one day she asked me "can you teach me and some other people to cook this delicious food?"

Q: How did you prepare for the day?

F.T: Megan asked many people to come along Sunday, about 10 or 12, and Megan and I went shopping at Rapid Creek Market that morning. We bought cassava leaves, sweet potato leaves, okra, tomatoes, onions, lemons, rice, oil, salt and beef

We went to Megan's house with the food, and at 3pm the people arrived.

Q: Were you confident to speak English with these people?

F.T: Not really because many of the people I did not know. But Megan helped me when I had difficulty.

Q: Was the cooking class a hard days work?

F.T: Not really, it took about 6-7 hours with shopping and cooking. Because I was with other people, sharing, helping, talking together I enjoyed it. It is not as hard as cooking for the family.

Q: Were you worried that people may not like the food?

F.T: Yes, but after cooking and eating everyone said how much they enjoyed the food and the learning, so I was not worried after that.

Q: Would you like to teach cooking again Fatuma?

F.T: I am happy to teach African or Congolese cooking again. Everyone is welcome.

Kachumberee

Ingredients:

2 onions sliced
2-3 tablespoons salt
3 limes
2 thinly sliced tomatoes

Method:

Put sliced onions into a bowl and add salt
Squish in your hands a lot until very bruised
Rinse under water to get rid of salt and oil of onion
Put in tomatoes and the juice of 3 limes
Let sit for 1 hour
Add a little salt again and serve

Ugali

Ingredients:

Maize flour
Water

Method:

Add two cups of maize flour to a pot of water.
Mix for 10-15 minutes until it makes a stiff paste.
Scoop out of the saucepan with a small bowl to form mounds.

Volunteers form an integral and valued part of Melaleuca's service provision. They give freely of their time to ensure that newly arrived families enjoy a smooth transition to their new surroundings. This page is dedicated to the volunteering experience. We welcome contributions from volunteers that describe their experiences in assisting with the orientation of refugees to their new lives in Darwin.

Social support - a spicy mix!

Aaron Watson, 26, first came to the Territory about five years ago during university holidays. On finishing university in Sydney he returned to work as a graduate with the Department of the Chief Minister. Aaron now works with the NT Government in Road Safety, and is involved in voluntary capacities with a number of organisations including Melaleuca, Australian Red Cross, Foundation for Young Australians, and the Oaktree Foundation

As a support group volunteer with Melaleuca I have had many fun and memorable occasions. I started out about two years ago as a way to contribute locally to many of the issues I am passionate about at a global level. I have been to a number of developing countries in Asia, and have always wanted to travel to Africa to experience the culture, scenery and meet the people.

I never thought that the Melaleuca experience would be so fulfilling. There is something to be said about volunteering for a cause, but when you volunteer to work with people, it adds a few exciting ingredients to the mix.

I have been welcomed as a brother and son into all of the families I have worked with, into their extended families and the wider Sudanese, Congolese and Liberian communities.

Highlights of being a support group volunteer include:

- Cooking a BBQ with my Congolese friends at Lee Point and getting swamped by a heavy rain storm. Sausages were still tasty, despite being wet

- Dancing Aussie and African style at Birthday parties
- Very cute babies and toddlers
- Mama Sakina's cooking; and
- Children running to hug me when I come to visit.



In the picture: Erick, Tresor, Aaron & Amisi [L-R].



VOLUNTEERS WANTED

You can make a real difference!

If you have ever thought about helping refugee people in a practical and useful way, here's a great opportunity!

We need volunteers to help support refugee families arriving in their new home of Darwin during 2007. The first step to volunteering is to attend training sessions which run either mid-week or on Saturdays.

To register please contact the Volunteer Coordinator on 8985 3311 or email volunteers@melaleuca.org.au

Written Contributions Welcome

The Melaleuca Refugee Centre Newsletter is about connecting communities.

We invite you to submit your written views about topics that are relevant to you. These may not be limited to issues pertaining to refugees, but may include human rights, women, youth, children, employment, government policies, culture, arts, or any other topic you would like to discuss.

Contribution may be submitted in language. We also welcome contributions on events held by the many community groups in our community. Please send your contributions to our editorial team.

Melaleuca reaches milestone

Girma Seid is a trailblazer. That is, he was the very first person from Africa to settle in Darwin under the humanitarian program. Since then Girma has made himself available to emerging communities in the NT in different capacities. Importantly, Girma has remained committed to the vision of justice and respect for human dignity. Here Girma shares some of his thoughts as the Melaleuca Refugee Centre prepares to celebrate its 10th anniversary later in the year.

It was in 1997 when I was first introduced to a service available for survivors of torture and trauma, as it was known, in a small office at Parap with only two staff members. When the office changed its location from Parap to Nightcliff, and when the focus of intake shifted from mostly former Yugoslavia to Africa, this was the only agency that had very close relationship with the few people from refugee background.

Though, the agency was not involved with the provision of settlement services, there was a lot to do in engaging communities in various activities. Staff within the agency were strongly dedicated in involving community members in consultations and projects that were taking place from time to time. We were all closely attached to the agency and participate in all the programs and committed to contribute in every way we could.

Today, when I look back the last ten years, and be able to witness the progress and the achievements this organisation has made since its inception, I feel a sense of pride to be part of it and become a member as an employee of a dedicated team strive to deliver the best services unique from other similar agencies.

It is not only the growth and expansion in size that impresses me a lot, but the range of available services the organization provides and the diversity of staff members from various backgrounds and the knowledge and experience they come with. Being part of such committed members who are always willing to share their experiences and learn from others has been a great opportunity for me to enhance and develop my understanding of our purposes in life.

The success of Melaleuca Refugee Centre in the last ten years owes to the outstanding foundation presented by the indescribable courage, strength and life skill of the client group who directly or indirectly contributed to its growth.

I believe in the coming years this dedication and determination of the organisation stakeholders will continue to prevail to serve the purpose.

Girma Seid

A 10th Anniversary special issue newsletter will be out in early November. Contributions are welcome from past friends, volunteers and staff. Please send your story, photos, or any other memorabilia to our editorial team.

Counselling changes at the top

August 2007 sees the return to Victoria of the outgoing Counselling Team Leader, Karen Chugg and the welcoming of Jonathan Lin in the newly designated role of Counselling Team Co-ordinator.

Karen has overseen the expansion and development of the Counselling team into a dynamic and proactive unit, and has inspired us all with her care and warmth.

Jo brings to the position a wealth of international humanitarian and cross cultural experience, together with counselling, asylum seeker and management expertise. Jo and Karen will work together throughout August, to ensure a smooth transition for the team.

During this transition period, the Counselling Team will continue to provide a sensitive and skilled response to people in the community who are struggling with sadness, anxiety and the challenges of resettlement.

Sara De Luca has been elevated to the Senior Counsellor position. Sara's significant cross-cultural experience and clinical expertise, compliment a capable and responsive counselling team at Melaleuca.



In the picture: Outgoing Counselling Team-Leader will be sorely missed

NAIDOC: 50 years looking forward, looking blak

National NAIDOC Week set its eyes on Darwin in 2007, and Darwin did not disappoint. The week long celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people cultures was marked with cultural performances, arts, forums, exhibitions, balls and the traditional march through the city, which this year was described as the biggest march to date.

On July 13, 1500 took to the streets not only to celebrate the survival of Indigenous culture and the Indigenous contribution to modern Australia, but to show that Indigenous people have a voice. This came in the wake of the federal government's "new paternalism" approach in response to the Little Children are Sacred Report.

The government intervention plan included bans on alcohol and pornography within Aboriginal communities, compulsory medical examinations, restrictions on welfare payments, and most peculiarly, the removal of the permits system to enter Aboriginal homelands.

Many have judged the interventionist government approach as a vote grabbing exercise at a time when Australian voters are showing discontent with the incumbent administration. And while the moral argument about saving the children may have won the government a few points in the polls, history shows that Indigenous issues have seldom influence election outcomes.

For years all levels of government have systematically ignored the calls of Indigenous people to address the very issues that Little Children are Sacred Report highlighted. Institution and programs dealing with Indigenous issues have been defunded and Indigenous affairs have been rendered almost invisible in the Australian political landscape.

So, why has the suffering of Aboriginal people in remote communities been politicised at this time? Surely this can not be just a vote grabbing exercise?

Evidence has surfaced revealing that Indigenous Affairs minister Mal Brough introduced the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Amendment (Township Leasing) Bill 2007 to parliament on 24th May 2007 - more than one month before the Australian Government received the Little Children are Sacred Report and announced its interventionist plan.

The Bill provides for the Office of the Executive Director of Township Leasing to be established, to manage for a period of 5 years, leases granted to the Commonwealth under section 19A of the Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act. Poignantly, the money required to run this initiative will come out from the Aboriginal Benefit Account.

Many may see the government plans as a land grabbing exercise. Accordingly, there may be nothing new in the "new paternalism" approach. So the NAIDOC celebration theme of 50 years: Looking Forward, Looking Blak may disguise the premonition that the now familiar history of dispossession may well be repeating itself. **Please no... Not there again.**



Darwin NAIDOC March – biggest ever.

All Hmong must go

By Bangkok Post reporters

The 7,700 Hmong refugees currently living in a make-shift camp in Phetchabun will be deported to Laos as no countries have come forward to offer them resettlement.

Supreme Commander Boonsrang Niumpradit said on Saturday the Hmong living at the Ban Huay Nam Khao camp in Khao Kho district had little chance of being offered resettlement in a third country and therefore had no choice but to return to Laos. "None of them are allowed to live in Thailand anymore and Laos is ready to take them back," he said.

Officials said it would take them two months to get the personal records in order for all the refugees after which they would be deported to Laos.

Gen Boonsrang dismissed fears from human rights groups that the Hmong will be mistreated by the Laotian authorities if they were to return to Laos.

Third Army commander Jiradet Khotcharat said the deportation of the Hmong was not a matter of concern because they had illegally entered Thailand and therefore had to be sent back.

Many of the Lao Hmong were allies of the US and fought against the communists during the Vietnam War. After the 1975 victory of the communist Pathet Lao, about 300,000 Hmong poured into Thailand, many later resettling in the US and elsewhere.

Lt-Gen Jiradet said the recent relocation of Lao-born Hmong at Ban Huay Nam Khao refugee camp to a new shelter, about two kilometres away, went well.

Security is being heightened at the new camp, and access to the refugees is being very tightly restricted. The authorities want to ensure no new Hmong refugees sneak into the camp, he said.

A security source said an average of about 12 Hmong babies are born in the camp every month, leading to increasing overcrowding.



Love Poetry Hate Racism

I do not understand why colour is discriminated upon, segregated
and treated differently
At the end we are all running the same race down the valley and up
the mountain.
But I won't say nothing coz I told you so
Only time will tell.
Just think about a world without colour
It is a world of joy and happiness
A world without colour brings forth peace and prosperity
A world without colour is like a spectacular fireworks display that
brightens up the darkness
A light that brings life to the world
A world without colour is my dream world
Coz in the world without colour I won't be black.
Coz in the world without colour I won't be white.
A world without colour is a world of beauty, wonder, laughter and
mysteries.
I wish I know. I would let you know, coz at the end we are all run-
ning the same race
But only time will tell the price we have to pay.
Colour will tell you nothing coz I told you so
It is never something that happens by accident
Neither is it something that happens over night
Only time will tell.
You can stand tall and look at him in the face and simply say "wow
he is black".
You can stand tall and look at him in the face and simply say "wow
he is white".
But she looks at him and simply says "wow that is another man
trying all his might".

I heard the whispers of colours come from all directions.
When they blow they sweep across the surface like the kiss of the
dead.
There must be a reason
Only time will tell coz I told you so.
Who ever says racism never exists is like a snake without fangs
A coward in many eyes
Don't fear
Speak out
Fight back with the armour of truth
Coz it is racism we are breeding
We must admit it is a danger
We must admit it is a weapon of utmost destruction
But I'm here in the struggle
I'm part of the Northern Territory
I'm here part of the community
I'm here part of society
I'm here part of the nation
Coz only time will tell.
When did you last see a black and white man give each other a hug
of friendship?
Yes? No? Think again that is a message to all
"Racism is neither black nor white.
It is the hatred, the intolerance and just a difference in colour.
Please let us all blow the trumpets aloud
Join the fight to end racism coz at the end we are all running the
same race.

By Donald Unzi



FICT: Working with families in cultural transition

The Families in Cultural Transition (FICT) Program at Melaleuca has been back since December 2006. And it's been an incredible busy time, challenging and full of new discoveries.

I feel I will never stop learning with FICT! It is very exciting to be involved in such a creative and versatile project.

FICT was developed to help immigrants and refugees to better deal with the process of adjusting to their new home. The program consists of 12 workshops exploring different areas and issues refugee families may experience during their settlement period in Darwin.

Key areas to be explored are cross-cultural communication and what constitutes culture, the different concepts in Australian society and institutions, problem-solving strategies, information-gathering strategies and the development of support networks.

The groups are facilitated by two bi-cultural facilitators from same background as participants; the workshops are delivered in the language of the participants in a context where family members feel valued and supported, have fun and empower themselves with skills to access information they need.

I have migrated from Brazil four years ago and I have experienced the difficulties of settling in Australia; the culture is so different, the way people are expected to communicate, all the different rules, all the non-spoken rules of society, such a variety of services. The need to start all over again, even after all those years of studying and working back home. ... so much to learn!!

It took me two years to settle and get back on track in my career. Nearly two years ago I started working with refugee youth at Parramatta Migrant Resource Centre in Western Sydney where I learned a lot about Australia, its people and how the system works.

In Sydney I was constantly referring clients to the FICT program that was run by the Services for the Treatment and



In the picture: FICT participants get a taste of Aboriginal culture with members of the Kalaluk Community

Recovery of Trauma and Torture Survivors of NSW.

When I decided to move to Darwin I started searching for jobs and I found out that Melaleuca was looking for a FICT worker. I applied for the position and here I am talking to you about FICT.

Since December 2006 FICT seven bi-cultural facilitators from Burundian, Congolese, Liberian, Sudanese and Somali communities have been recruited and trained.

Melaleuca ran 5 days train-the-trainer sessions at the beginning of February with the assistance of Jeannie O'Carroll, FICT Project Officer from STARTTS.

Four bi-cultural facilitators started running FICT groups in March. One group is the Burundian/Congolese FICT group, co-facilitated by Violette Batwenga and John Kabalu, the other is the Liberian FICT group, co-facilitated by Klubo Mulbah and Bob Jabateh.

A Sudanese group and a Somali group are due to start in September 2007.

The Australian Red Cross introduces "Beyond the Basics"; this is a course that examines International Humanitarian Law/Law of War.

In the 2007 course there are six modules to be held over a three-week period. So if you have ever wondered exactly what protections IHL affords in times of armed conflict?

Are you looking to find out what the Geneva Conventions say about prisoners of war?

Or seeking more information on the role of IHL in relation to Women's experiences in war?

What about discussing the relevance of IHL in a post-September 11 world?

To find out the answers to all these questions and more come along to the "Beyond the Basics" Course 2007!

For further information, please contact :

Joan Washington
International Humanitarian Law Program
Australian Red Cross NT
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Young Voices: World Refugee Day 2007

Refugee Week has been celebrated in Australia since 1986, to acknowledge the contributions that refugees make to Australian society and draw attention to international refugee concerns. Also acknowledging that there are still more than 20 millions refugees around the world in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and Europe.



The Melaleuca Refugee Centre celebrated Refugee Week 2007 with a festival at Jingili Water Gardens on Sunday, June 17. The festival, which was run in conjunction with the Darwin City Council FREEPS, was put together by young people from refugee background that have recently made the Territory their home. They have arrived from African countries and South East Asia, after enduring years of terror, war and life in refugee camps around the world.

From the very beginning of the project the voice of young refugees clearly indicated a desire to host an event that would recognise the diversity of the Darwin community, celebrate the achievements of young people and reflect on the plight of the millions of refugees around the world who have not been able to find a peaceful solution to their circumstances.

The celebrations included cultural dances, poetry, citizenship ceremonies, food, music, workshops and free entertainment for families. Donald Unzi (19) and Erick Zaera (20) spoke about the plight of refugees around the world and the hopes of young people settling in Australia.

These are the transcripts of Donald and Erick's addresses.

World Refugee Day is a day for the entire refugee through out the globe to celebrate and Share together their similarities and differences. It is this anniversary that the youth too wanted their voices to echo through out the world.

The refugee are often feared, sometimes parried but rarely understood. We all know how it is like to be a refugee, to leave your land and face the uncertainties of life abroad. A land you have never dreamed of. Where its culture and people you never know.



We must not be confused by the term "refugee"! Thanks to the Australian government now the refugee have a place call home though it is normal to try to cope with life and try to fit in the society, the word thanks is not just enough to appreciate the efforts of the Australian government for their tireless efforts to provide new home for the refugee.

They do not know how much it means to people like me. For a refugee you see every day is a struggle between life and death every seconds counts live is useless for a typical refugee not even Jesus can change it.

But as for the refugee who are here today, we were once hopeless and have no clear directions in life. Now we once again have hope and at least know where our foot is leading us to.

On the same note many thanks to the Australian government you respected our rights as refugee and welcome us to a place call home again. Now for our friends who are still out there faced by puzzling decisions every day. Can we please stand up for them and have a moment of silence...

May the good lord give them hope and courage.

By Donald Unzi

My name is Erick, I am Congolese, and I am 20 years old. I was born in Congo, and I started Primary school when I was 5 years old.

Then when the war started Congolese people ran to Uganda including me and my family because many Congolese died for nothing.

At that time the government of Congo decided for every one who has 18 years old to go and become soldier, that's the reason why we ran to Uganda to be refugees there. We stayed there as refugees for two years.

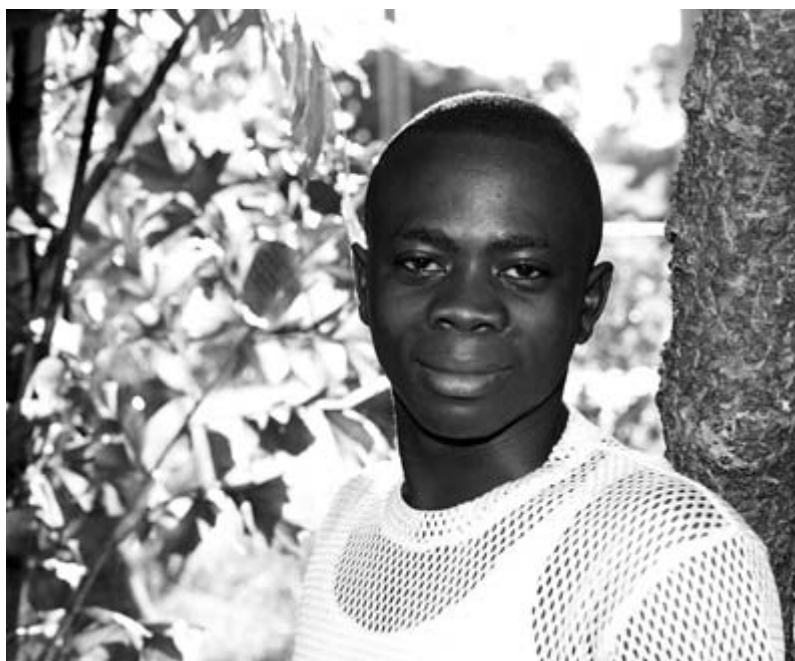
We reached Uganda in 2004 then in Aug 2007 we reached here in Australia. The first day I reached here, I saw different things from my country and this country. Why I say that is because in my country if you have 18 years old you can't have money from government but here in Australia if you are over 17 years old you will receive money from government this is the big difference.

Ok now I know as young refugees we like this Country but even if we like it, we don't want to forget our culture, like to respect every one, love every one and be in peace. If we continue to be in peace and respect our elders, in the future you can be lawyer you can be doctor and you can be a police officer.

Let's talk about the experience of refugees and young refugees. For us young refugees we already know some English and we can learn English until we get our degree. But for our parents they can't learn because they are old. When we reach Australia we become like parents because we need to interpret everything for our parents. We need to go with them to Centrelink, hospital and shopping.



Bridging divides on World Refugee Day 2007.



And another experience is for us young refugees we can play any sport because we have energy.

Let's talk about us young people.

I want to compare our experience here in Australia and that of those people in Africa. We know that in Africa our parents used to buy everything for us and did everything. For example, pay for school, hospital and clothes.

But here in Australia our experience is we are more independent. Us young refugees we can organise how to make life here in Australia. We want someone to give us a hand, and then we can make something good in the future.

At this time many refugees are still there in the camps. The children and young refugees and parents too, when they are there they can't go to school, if they are sick it is difficult to get money to pay for hospital.

So for us who are here let's pray to God to bring our brothers and sisters to Australia. Talk to governments to bring our young refugees here because they are suffering in the different camps.

The community of young refugees we say thank you to the government for accepting us to come here to Australia and we say thank you to the Melaleuca Refugee Centre for welcoming us on our first day here.

Community Noticeboard



Torture and Trauma Survivors Service of the NT Inc.

Annual General Meeting

Special General Meeting

Tuesday, 18 September 2007 5:30 pm

Agenda: Changes to the Constitution

The proposed changes will be mailed out to members or can be sighted in our office.

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, 18 September 2007, 6:00 pm

Agenda to include Annual Report, Financial Report, election of office bearers.

For enquiries, membership and nomination forms call 8985 3311

Rapid Creek Shopping Centre
48 Trower Rd
Millner NT 0810



Northern Territory Anti-Discrimination Commission
Promoting Harmony, Respect and Equality of
Opportunity in the Territory
Know Your Rights and Responsibilities
Discrimination and harassment are unlawful
Do you have a complaint?

For information or request for training call us on
Freecall: 1800 813 846
Website: www.adc.nt.gov.au

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Starting Thursday August 16 at 6:30 pm at Casuarina Senior College

Tutors: Onesphore Ndayizeye, McRoberts Aгаа and Bupe Kyelu

Cost: \$50.00 per semester

For early registration and payment,
please call CSC – 8920 1200

Ethical Investments

Use Your Investment Property to make a Difference

An opportunity exists for property owners to make a real difference in the quality of life of newly arrived families from refugee background while enjoying the full benefits of your investment.

The Melaleuca Refugee Centre has an extensive list of reliable tenants unable to participate in the market place due to language barriers, short employment history, lack of referees and short rental history, ready to sign tenancy agreements suitable to your needs.

Our Housing Team provides training in tenancy responsibility and property maintenance to every new family. We can also facilitate interpreter services and ongoing support for tenants and landlords.

If you wish to give someone a new start in life and want your investment to provide safety and stability to families and individuals who have prevailed against extraordinary circumstances register your interest with the Melaleuca Refugee Centre now.

Contact Melaleuca Housing Team on 8985 3311

**Invest to make a better world,
it's worth it**