



Points of Departure Project

Context

Multicultural Centre for Women's Health is an immigrant and refugee women's organisation committed to improving the health and wellbeing of immigrant and refugee women across Australia.

Multicultural Centre for Women's Health provides national leadership and excellence in multilingual health education, advocacy, training and research with specific expertise in sexual, reproductive, occupational and mental health.

Points of Departure Project Summary

"There are no arrivals anywhere, there are only points of departure"

- Simone de Beauvoir

The Points of Departure Project, which will start in July 2008, aims to build knowledge and capacity among NGOs and individuals around Australia to advocate on key issues of relevance, and specific, to immigrant and refugee women.

It takes as inspiration Simone de Beauvoir's observation, cited above, that women's lives are dynamic and marked by constant change. This is particularly the case for immigrant and refugee women, for whom their "arrival" in Australia is also a departure point for a new phase in their lives and marks the start of their participation in Australian cultural and political life.

Advocacy too is a practice that must be constantly changing and developing, as knowledge, political, social, cultural and economic circumstances, and the industrial environments we work in, also change. Effective advocacy requires, as an essential element, a solid foundation of shared understanding - points of departure.

The Points of Departure Project will result in the production and promotion of an Advocacy Toolkit, consisting of a series of 'position and action' papers on national issues relevant to immigrant and refugee women. The Toolkit will gather together current available research, map current trends and challenges, and make recommendations for effective advocacy around key action areas. Once developed the Kit will be made widely available on-line and will be widely promoted among key stakeholders.

The key issues to be addressed in the Advocacy Toolkit will be decided by a national Expert Advisory Committee that will guide the project, with the input of key stakeholders from across Australia. The Expert Advisory Committee will be made up of key stakeholders from around Australia, with broad representation from each state and territory and will ensure that the project is provided with expertise in the range of issues relevant to immigrant and refugee women and that the project is well-linked with communities of interest in each state and territory. The key issues will be chosen from a list of key social inclusion indicators.

Points of Departure will be conducted in 5 stages:

1. A Discussion Paper mapping the main national issues for immigrant and refugee women will be developed. The paper will be developed in consultation with the Expert Advisory Committee and will be circulated for comment among up to 100 key stakeholders for comment.
2. A National Forum will be held which brings together key stakeholders from across Australia who have viewed and provided comment on the discussion paper. The participants of the national forum will guide the decision-making process for choosing the 5-6 key issues that will be addressed in the Advocacy Toolkit. The Forum will also bring together the existing experiential and grass-roots knowledge around those issues.
3. A Literature Review and Consultation Process around these 5-6 key issues will be conducted after the national forum.
4. A series of position and action papers will be developed. These papers will outline the available research, draw out the main trends and challenges currently existing in these 5-6 areas and develop practical strategies for addressing these. The draft papers will be circulated among the key stakeholders who attended the national forum for final comment and then they will be finalised in consultation with the Advisory Committee.
5. The Advocacy Toolkit, which will consist of the papers addressing the 5-6 key issues, along with supplementary information linking users of the Toolkit with other resources for Effective Advocacy, will be produced and launched. It will then be widely promoted and disseminated for the use of advocates around Australia.

For further information about the Points of Departure Project, please contact MCWH on 03 9418-0999 or reception@mcwh.com.au.

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