



Volunteering and Ethnic Communities

A Dialogue with Ethnic Communities

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Public and Voluntary Organisations

Community Development Group of the Department of Internal Affairs

New Zealand Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux

All the Regional Ethnic Councils

Regional Ethnic Councils who organised forums: Auckland; Tauranga; Wellington; Nelson; Christchurch;

PEETO Asia Pacific English Language College, Christchurch

Community Groups

Volunteer Centres in Auckland, Tauranga, Wellington, Nelson and Christchurch

Office of Ethnic Affairs

Representatives of the Citizens Advice Bureaux from Tauranga, Auckland, Wellington, Nelson and Christchurch

Individuals

Sheryn Elborn, Community Development Group for heading this project's Steering Group

Nick Toonen, CEO, New Zealand Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux and member of this project's Steering Group

Vas Gavriel, Office of Ethnic Affairs and member of this project's Steering Group

Prem Singh, Ethnic Council of Wellington and member of this project's Steering Group

Ida Wee, for assisting with this project

Cath McFadden, Communication Officer, New Zealand Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux

Rattan Prakash, Executive Officer, New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils

Foreword 1 Prime Minister



Prime Minister

16 November 2004

**Foreword
NZ Federation of Ethnic Councils
Volunteering and Ethnic Communities Report**

I am pleased to write the forward to this report. The New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils provides a pan-ethnic view of volunteering outlining the needs of a broad range of ethnic groups. The report is further enhanced by the fact that the Federation and the New Zealand Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux, worked in collaboration on this project.

In 2001 the government established the Office of Ethnic Affairs, and a Minister for Ethnic Affairs provides ethnic communities with a voice at the Cabinet table.

New Zealand is privileged to have such a diverse and exciting ethnic population which positively adds to the fabric of New Zealand society. It is not always easy for refugees and migrants to settle into their new country. They have often left family behind in conditions that most of us in New Zealand could not imagine. The language and customs of their adopted country are often so very different to their own and difficult to understand.

Volunteering is an integral part of New Zealand society and it is essential that all citizens and residents who wish to be are involved in this activity.

The government realises the important role that volunteering plays in New Zealand Society and in 2001 we established an ongoing fund - The Support for Volunteers' Fund - as part of the United Nations declared International Year of the Volunteer. In addition to the Fund, the Government established an Office of the Community and Voluntary Sector and developed a policy and work programme on volunteering.

The New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils saw the need to increase the number of ethnic volunteers, and undertook research to determine the reasons why ethnic people did not participate in volunteering at the same rate as others in our society. This report is the result of this research.

It is important that those involved in volunteering in New Zealand study this report and collaborate with NZFEC to determine ways in which the recommendations can be implemented, as increasing ethnic volunteers can only benefit the individual, the organization, the community and our society.

I once again commend the NZFEC and NZACAB for undertaking such positive research.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Helen Clark'.

Helen Clark
Prime Minister

Foreword 2 New Zealand Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux

New Zealand Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux

Ngā Pokapū Whakahoki Pātai mai i te Iwi Whānui

Citizens Advice Bureaux in New Zealand were delighted to be able to build a mutually supportive relationship with Ethnic Councils through the Volunteering in Ethnic Communities Project.

The project saw us working together to

- identify barriers which discourage ethnic people from volunteering and strategies for addressing these barriers
- develop best practice guidelines for voluntary organisations on involving volunteers from ethnic communities
- build an information kit for ethnic communities and voluntary organisations on ethnic peoples' volunteering
- develop joint strategies for promoting the Citizens Advice service to ethnic communities.

This final report on the project captures the great richness and diversity amongst ethnic communities in relation to volunteering, and is a positive step towards greater involvement and inclusion of ethnic peoples in volunteering and in society as a whole.



Nick Toonen
Chief Executive

Foreword 3 New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils

I am delighted to write this forward. Delighted for two reasons, one it brings completion to phase one of the Federation's volunteer project, and that always gives a level of satisfaction and two the Federation can now begin its work in implementing the recommendations outlined in this report. This will be done in collaboration with volunteering agencies within Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Federation undertook this project when it became aware that people within Ethnic Communities were not putting themselves forward to volunteer in Aotearoa New Zealand. Statistics showed that the number of ethnic volunteers was very low compared to other groups. The Federation wanted to know the reasons behind this statistic. It obtained funding from the Support for Volunteer Fund, and embarked on this project. We thought it wise to seek support from an organisation that is built on volunteers – New Zealand Citizens Advice Bureaux. They agreed to work with us on this project.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank NZCAB for taking up our request. It was an honour to work with people who are so committed to volunteering. The Federation was able to learn much from those involved.

There are many others who supported us through this process we wish to thank. Names of these people and groups are stated in the acknowledgement section of this report. Without their support, this report would not be a reality.

The challenge for us all is to understand the barriers identified by the Ethnic Communities and work together as a community to dismantle them.

We, as members of the Ethnic community and residents of New Zealand, must not hang back waiting for people to come to us; we must put ourselves forward, become involved in the community and volunteer. This report gives us permission and hopefully the courage to do so.

Pancha Narayanan
National President

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Background

The Volunteering and Ethnic Communities Project has been undertaken by the New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils, with funding from the Community Development Group.

The objectives of this project are to:

- Identify barriers to ethnic people's participation in mainstream and ethnic community volunteering,
- Seek ways to overcome these barriers, and
- Make recommendations for the future.

The report reflects the dialogue with the ethnic communities and interest groups on these key issues. This was achieved through forums held in Tauranga, Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Nelson between June and October 2003.

1.2 Observations and Interpretations

Observations and interpretations from this dialogue include the following key points:

- Members of ethnic communities are seriously underrepresented in voluntary organisations at all levels and most do not fully understand the New Zealand concept of volunteering.
- There are a large number of perceived, and genuine, racial and cultural barriers to volunteering for ethnic people.
- Migrant settlement issues and the lack of ethnic community volunteers are very closely linked and migrant and ethnic community voluntary contributions are perceived as under-valued.
- Culturally acceptable practices are required in volunteer organisations to encourage members of ethnic communities to become volunteers.
- Regional Ethnic Councils are unable to cope with the surge in demand for advice and support from Government, voluntary organisations, public agencies and new migrants.
- Regional Ethnic Councils want to forge new and improved relationships with other voluntary organisations, such as local Citizens Advice Bureaux (CABs) and Volunteer Centres.
- The absence of Government support and resources aimed specifically at building confidence, self-esteem and "know how" in ethnic communities is contributing to the lack of ethnic people's participation in the voluntary sector.

1.3 Barriers to Volunteering

Barriers to volunteering identified through these forums have been presented under the following five main categories:

- **Personal Matters** – especially issues like a lack of language competence, low personal confidence, family commitments and lack of knowledge of the local culture.
- **Social Factors** – the perception in ethnic communities that there are “Kiwi ways of doing things” and that learning these ways is essential for people to be socially accepted in this country.
- **Cultural Factors** – cultural differences and differences in gender roles, family values and practices.
- **Voluntary Organisations** – the inability of members of volunteer organisations to relate to the needs of ethnic community members was a primary topic of concern for ethnic communities.
- **Government Factors** – changes in Government policies affecting the support and funding of volunteer organisations have meant that these organisations have had to make rapid changes and focus on core activities. Encouraging ethnic community members to volunteer is often not seen as a core activity.

1.4 Overcoming Barriers

The key ideas for overcoming barriers to volunteering have been grouped under the same five categories.

- **Personal Barriers** can be overcome by raising individual self-esteem by making educational training and English language classes part of the training for volunteering.
- **Social Barriers** can be overcome by networking with other organisations to assist jointly with migrant settlement, using ethnic festivals and cultural events to establish greater rapport with voluntary organisations, and highlighting success stories and the ways agencies are working together.
- **Cultural Barriers** can be overcome by ethnic community efforts to raise public awareness of cross-cultural diversity, by cross-cultural education, and by providing new immigrants with information packs on the “Kiwi ways of doing things”.
- **Voluntary organisations** need to adopt a culturally acceptable approach to services and work collaboratively with ethnic community groups such as Regional Ethnic Councils to recruit ethnic people as volunteers.
- **The Government** needs to address funding limitations, funding allocations and settlement issues such as housing, health and education. It also needs to develop strategies and policies that help to address discrimination and promote cultural diversity.

1.5 Key Recommendations of this Report

Specific actions that need to be supported to encourage ethnic volunteering are as follows:

- **Individuals** in ethnic communities can make a difference to their own and other people’s lives by networking to widen their social contacts and exploring educational opportunities to learn more about the New Zealand lifestyle.

Continued Government support for educational programmes such as ESOL (learning English as a second language) and KiwiOra will be required to support these efforts.

- **Ethnic community** groups such as Regional Ethnic Councils, local religious bodies and individual community or cultural organisations must raise awareness of volunteering through local programmes.
- **Voluntary organisations** must review current recruitment procedures and training for ethnic volunteers and explore ways to find more funding to develop training programmes and introductory seminars for ethnic communities.
- **The Government** must ensure that targeted funding is available directly to ethnic communities to develop their own resources and training and communication packages to use within their own communities.