

The evaluation of Community Partnerships for Human Rights Program

Working with and for Muslim Communities

In 2007, the Commission established this 3 year program to address human rights issues experienced by Muslim Australians. The program uses a multi project, multi setting, partnership-based, whole-of-community, community engagement and social inclusion framework with the goal to:

Increase awareness and understanding of human rights issues, decrease discrimination against and increase Muslim Australians' social inclusion and participation.

The projects to be evaluated include:

- Community Policing Partnership Project: to Build Social Cohesion and Harmony with Australian Muslim Communities
- A Community Arts and Culture Initiative with Muslim Australians.
- Adult English as a Second Language Human Rights Curriculum Resources for New Arrivals project
- Community Language Schools Human Rights Curriculum Resource and Campaign project
- Freedom of Religion and Belief in the 21st Century - research project
- African Australians: A Report on the Human Rights and Social Inclusion Issues –research project
- Intersections between the Law, Religion and Human Rights: a roundtable dialogue between judicial officers, academics, religious and community leaders
- Muslim Diversity E-forum and clearinghouse project

Because of the complexity in evaluating all these projects we have developed the evaluation as a 'horizontal project' with the aim to develop an evaluation plan and implement it across the program and in keeping with the available resources (skills, capacity, budget and timelines).

What is the evaluation process?

Broadly:

- Develop the evaluation plan in consultation with partners – Sept/Oct 2008
- Develop and agree indicators of success
- Document and share the evaluation plan Oct/Nov 2008
- Start implementation including pre intervention/baseline activities where agreed
- Progress report March 2008
- Final report March 2010.

Update

Whilst our evaluation is effect focused, because the projects are still in an early stage we do not yet have information on their effects (impact/outcomes). What we can report on is what we have delivered (or our outputs) to date, which includes:

- CPHR Program launch at Australian Partnership of Religious Organisations conference in Sydney, 18 June 2007
- 10 projects established
- 12 negotiated and formally documented partnerships/ collaborations:

- Australian Multicultural Foundation (in 2 separate partnerships), Adult Migrant Education Services (VIC) (in 2 separate partnerships), the Australian Red Cross, FaHCSIA, the Diversity Health Institute, the Australia Council, the Institute of Cultural Diversity, Monash and RMIT universities, and Community Languages Australia.
- 13 discrete Governance groups/advisors
 - with 28 Muslim members
- Community Engagement Network established with Muslim communities and stakeholders and regular communication channels with 300 members
- Not including media or web access - our program has been able involve 1160 people from either community, stakeholder and partner organisations just in developing and planning the projects.

Resources developed:

- Trust poster- distributed to 500 police stations in NSW. The poster information aims to help the monitoring and response of racial and religious vilification
http://www.humanrights.gov.au/racial_discrimination/publications/trust.html
- Living Spirit report- Report on the Commission's Muslim Women's project in 2006
http://www.humanrights.gov.au/racial_discrimination/livingspirit/index.html
- Website dedicated to the program (www.humanrights.gov.au/partnerships)
- Freedom of Religion and Belief in the 21st Century 2008 Discussion Paper

Evaluation Project in more detail

1. Aims and objectives

Aim

- To determine if the CPHR Program has been relevant, effective and efficient.
- To report to government, HREOC, and other stakeholders the activity, effectiveness and outcomes of the program.

Objectives

- Assess if the program objectives or agreed indicators have been achieved
- Assess if individual project objectives or agreed indicators have been achieved
- Ensure across the complex evaluation (multi-strategy/project/setting/community), good coordination, consistency, rigour and validity of outcomes.
- Identify new strategic and policy outcomes that contribute to better working with communities and Muslim communities to promote human rights.
- Identify new evidence and models that contribute to better working with communities and Muslim communities to promote human rights.

1. How successful were we? How effective, efficient and relevant was the program and projects?

Questions we will ask and answer include:

- What has been the participation of the Muslim community, Partners, Stakeholders - in the planning and delivery of project activities?
- How effective has this been?
- What strategies/resources/tools have helped Muslim communities to better understand and address human rights and discrimination issues?
- How effective have the strategic partnerships been in the design and implementation of individual projects
- What change has there been in the broader community around discrimination issues for Muslim communities
- What increase has there been in the knowledge and awareness of Muslim communities to deal with discrimination/vilification
- What change (increase) has there been in social connectedness and participation
- What change (decrease) has there been in discrimination/vilification
- What change has there been in community trust?
- What activities have not been effective?

2. How will we measure our success?

By

1. Collecting participation and reach data– at program, project and 'projects of -projects' level*
**Funded projects under the auspice of individual projects e.g. the police and Muslim communities project has funded 19 'projects' across Australia in the 08/09 funding round.*
2. Monitoring of program management (to indicate efficiency, value and accountability).
3. Assessing perceived quality, value and satisfaction of the program by
 - a. Partners, other stakeholders and community - as part of HREOC's commitment to partnership and community engagement best practice and proactive risk management
1 2 3 4 5
4. Assessing quality of shared evaluation ownership and impact on evaluation empowerment, uptake and the skills of both HREOC and program partners 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14.

Looking at pre and post measures including changes in the:

5. Status of human rights/Muslim issues as a priority in the organisations we work with
6. Knowledge of complaints systems to deal with discrimination
7. Ability to relate concepts of discrimination to everyday life
8. Human rights knowledge, awareness, attitudes, reported behaviour change or intention to change¹⁵.
9. Perceptions of confidence, empowerment social connectedness
10. Perceptions of trust
11. Perceptions of social connectedness as an indicator of social capital^{16 17} and social inclusion¹⁸
¹⁹ (as indicator of bridging/social capital)
12. Momentum towards change in systems and policy that negatively affect Muslim communities

3. Who is the evaluation for?

Our evaluation audience includes program partners, community, government and the general public.

4. Who is helping us?

- **Project partners**

Using a participatory approach (adapted to a national scope)

Best practice evaluation planning with community stakeholders is also responsive or 'action research based' (reflective), collaborative and participatory^{20,21}. So we will seek the input of stakeholders (including the Muslim community representatives) and partners. Participatory evaluation has been shown to work well.^{22, 23,24,25,26}

- ***Muslim Advisor/'critical friend'* - Professor Abdullah Saeed**

Director, National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies

To help provide independent, strategic and expert advice on evaluation with and for Muslim communities we devised an advisory role, or 'critical friend', to the HREOC team and evaluation project. The role was accepted by Professor Abdullah Saeed, a high profile leader from both the Muslim community and the research and evaluation field.

- ***Evaluation Consultant - Dr Sonia Wutzke***

SW Consulting

SW Consulting was established in 1998 to provide a range of evaluation and research-based consultancy services to government, not-for-profit and private sectors. SW Consulting is operated by Dr Sonia Wutzke who has over fifteen years experience in the design and implementation of research and evaluations for comprehensive public health programs. Through her work, Dr Wutzke has focused primarily on health research, program evaluation, quality improvement, risk management, benchmarking and accountability. Dr Wutzke is a member of the Australasian Evaluation Society.

Dr Wutzke was awarded this consultancy in May 2008 after a tender process overseen by a selection committee with independent and HREOC membership.

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