

2021-2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Springvale Learning and Activities Centre Inc.

ABN 45 461 492 430

Inc No A0017387Y

Our aspiration is to enable the disadvantaged people in our community to break the cycle of poverty, isolation, and/or poor health and reach their full potential through learning and skills development, direct assistance, effective services, and facilitated community connections.

springvalelac.org.au



manager@springvalelac.org.au



Anti-Poverty Work

With the help of 38 volunteers, we provided 2,040 food emergency relief parcels and groceries vouchers to over 6,000 people.

Volunteers contributed over 18,000 hours to our work.

Collaborated with the anti-poverty consortium to inform the development of the Greater Dandenong Anti-Poverty Strategy. Surveyed and interviewed 30 clients receiving emergency relief assistance.

Key findings:

How our clients spend time during the day (8 am – 11 pm)

Exercise (walks, gym)	1.8%
Socializing	2.7%
Appointments (doctors, case managers) Caring duties	5.5%
Sleep (during the day)	8.2%
Cooking and meals	11%
Screen time (phones, TV)	13.5%
Housework	15.5%
Unsure*	17.3%
	24.5%

*Unsure – when the participants were not able to explain what exactly they would be doing; all were responding on how they were feeling. Common responses included: “feeling depressed”; “feeling anxious/fearful”; “worry”; “tired”. It is concerning to see how much time during one day people experiencing poverty spend in this state of mind.

Some of the common responses:

- All clients responded that if they had a job or otherwise decent income, their quality of life would improve.
- All clients responded that if they had better social connections and networks, they would be able to get a better job faster; or deal with their mental health issues more effectively.
- Most clients mentioned that if there were more small local organisations offering informal social/employment support it would help achieve better employment faster; and/or improve their mental and physical health.

CoCO's – Community Creating Opportunities

CoCO's was established to provide good quality pre-loved goods at low prices to the local community.

"CoCO's Working Solutions" program was successfully completed in June 2022.

Work experience at CoCO's.

Provided work experience opportunities to 40 participants over two years of the project. Achieved over 80% of employment outcomes, 35 participants secured employment.

Environmental Impact: Diverted 3 tonnes of textile material from landfill.

Upcycling Workshops in partnership with the Greater Dandenong Youth Services.

CoCO's Working Solutions Program supported the disadvantaged community members to develop the skills, mindsets and networks to successfully engage in civic and social life and achieve economic participation.



- Post-Program evaluations reported that 100% of young people understood how recycling and upcycling goods can positively contribute to the environment (a 34% increase from pre-program evaluations).
- All young people 'strongly agreed' that they felt confident to try new volunteering activities following their participation in IMPACT, a 44% increase from pre-program evaluations.
- All young people agreed that they felt comfortable performing customer service duties and money transactions, a 33% increase.
- 100% of young people reported that they understood what visual merchandising means and the importance of it, a huge 67% increase.
- Post-program, 100% of young people reported that they were motivated to get involved in volunteering – a 44% increase from the start of the program.

CoCO's Working Solutions Participants

Outcome by week five

A young woman in her 20's had come in asking if we were hiring. We advised that we didn't have any paid positions available but took the time to ask her how her job seeking journey had been. This had her open up and express the distress she was going through not being able to find a job due to lacking local experience. We told her about the "CoCO's Working Solutions" Program and she immediately signed up for it ready to do what it takes to be employable in Australia.

This participant had the skills and the motivation to be employable. She was confident and interacted with customers well. As a stretch we encouraged her to take a lead role when we had a couple of new volunteers. She was shy at first but very quickly found herself leading and teaching the new volunteers the ropes.

We provided her with the information and reference details for her to update her resume at a resume writing class she was attending at the time; and she secured employment by week 5 of the program.

The importance of coaching

During lock down we provided food aid and English classes to two women who were on a Protection Visa. They had been exploited in illegal labour hire and their whole journey of being brought out to Australia for work was built on deception so they were extremely vulnerable and lacked the education on how to support themselves in Australia. While Red Cross provided accommodation support, SLAC and CoCO's supported them with weekly food parcels as well as English classes and education on Australian culture, particularly around employment. As soon as CoCO's reopened post lock down, both women signed up to the "CoCO's Working Solutions" program.

Due to participating in other English classes, undergoing medical checks for their visas, needing to meet with their case worker as well as applying for licenses they were unable to do the same shifts every week.

These were perfect coaching opportunities to teach them effective communication in advance, teaching them the implications, stresses and shift in atmosphere when a staff member is not there unannounced when they are supposed to be. Punctuality improved, even understanding that having a coffee when they get to work needs to happen before their clock on time for that shift.

Another coaching opportunity was in the beginning; they would casually take phone calls while on the shop floor. We had a conversation about work etiquette in Australia. It helped the women reconcile the work culture they were used to back home and adjust accordingly.

We connected them to one of our networks, which runs an NDIS Carers company. Through our recommendation, they interviewed them and gave them a trial resulting in successful employment for both. The company owner expressed how impressed he was with their work ethics and skills and how their clients love them. Early on, there were situations where communication and punctuality needed to be addressed, but the feedback was that they took full responsibility and corrected the behavior. If these women had not participated in this program, they may not have fully understood the work requirements and could have compromised their employment.

Community Groups at SLAC

Following two years of lockdowns, restrictions and Covid anxiety we are delighted to see the community groups return to SLAC.

- Southern Migrant and Refugee Centre
- SICMAA
- Springvale Mandarin Support Network
- Clarinda Fishing Club
- Social Basketball
- Than Phong Taekwondo

We would like to welcome new groups:

- Victorian Chinese Senior Inc
- Madeenathul Uloom (Burmese Islamic School)



CALD Communities Taskforce

Local Partnership

SLAC was privileged to work with a number of local agencies, organizations and Local Government in this Taskforce.

Project outcomes included:

- Delivery of tailored support to priority communities and other CALD communities in the local area including hard to reach and isolated groups.
- More households from priority communities were supported through identification and training of community health champions to implement culturally sensitive mechanisms so that communities understand and comply with health directions and receive the support they need including, but not limited to isolation kits, food relief, health information and COVID-19 testing.
- More proactive outbreak/cluster management with better connection between local and state level COVID-19 response.
- Uptake of community services such as emergency relief increased.
- Young people, including those are most vulnerable, are supported to comply with health directions and more young people are presenting for testing.

Thanks to Dane Lao and Phiem Tran for their excellent work over the lifetime of the project supporting local Vietnamese and Cambodian communities.
Thanks to SICMAA for being an invaluable partner for SLAC and great support.

In the average month in 2021-22 Dane and Phiem:

- Connected 126 people from their communities with CoCO's to receive emergency food relief;
- Conducted 15 Covid vaccination specific information sessions for over 300 attendees;
- Provided transport, referral and communication support to vaccination for 58 clients;
- Published 58 Social Media posts in the Vietnamese and Khmer languages
- Developed own and translated 121 various health promotion resources.
- Provided referrals in cases other than Covid to over 30 clients
- Engaged with over 1,000 people in various forms over the course of the average month.

Adult Education

SLAC was the winner of 2022 Chisholm Education Community Partnerships Award.

Great achievement and the result of dedication and hard work of the teams from SLAC and Chisholm Skills and Jobs Centre.

David Hawking and Bev Douglas attended the awards ceremony and celebrated with Andrea O'Bryan, the Manager of Chisholm Skills and Jobs Centre.

In partnership with local schools and community organisations SLAC delivered over 22,000 student contact hours to over 170 adult learners.

Most of our learners have no or very low level of the English language, over 80% are women with pre-school aged children.

We would like to thank our valuable partners for their contribution to make sure we achieve learning outcomes for all of our adult students.

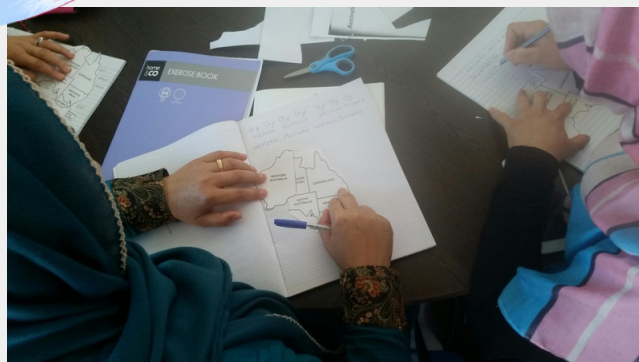
Springvale Rise Primary School Community Hub
Dandenong South Primary School Community Hub
Yarraman Oakes Primary School
Catholic Care (Dandenong)
Afghan Women's Organisation of Victoria
Narre Warren South P12 College
Hampton Park Library
Department of Justice and Community Safety
Chisholm Skills and Jobs Centre

We thank our team of talented and committed tutors for their professionalism, good will and loyalty to their learner and the community.

What our tutors say

To give a person the gift of reading is very precious.

F is an Afghan asylum seeker who now resides in Melbourne. In desperation, her introduction into Australian waters was on a decrepit Indonesian fishing boat, and along with her husband and small child, she spent several hours floating on broken pieces of fishing boat hoping to be rescued and accepted into safety. In Afghanistan, she did not attend school so her introduction into education has been only in the past few years. Her husband and 4 children speak English quite well, after being assimilated into Australian society, but as a stay at home wife and mother, F hasn't had as many opportunities to progress in her English skills.



The 'Pathways to Literacy' Course at the Dandenong South Primary School Community Hub was chosen after tutors came to realise that the 'Everyday English' courses were being hindered by the inability of many of the students to actually read or write the English they were learning to speak. We were drawn to a phonics-based program with the hope that the students would complement their spoken English with the skills to be able to read and write as well.

One thing that was quite noticeable for me as I've been teaching this course, is that often the students come into the class with the knowledge of the English alphabet letter names. Not to say this isn't good, as it's good to know the names. However, learning the letter names exclusively without phonetic awareness has proven difficult for them in their learning to read. For example, the ability to sound out phonetically the word | b | a | t | requires the student to be aware of the sounds the letters make to blend it together. Initially my students would sound this out by verbalising | bee | ay | tee | and then consequently would tell me the word was be-ay-te, or some form of that.

This has just reinforced to me the crucial importance of what I am teaching and my favourite thing is when my students learn new phonograms, single or multiple letters, and blend them together using their new skills, and then watching their eyes light up when the word comes together that they have read, and then turns into phrases and then sentences, and that is so very exciting. To give a person the gift of reading is very precious.

Jobs Victoria Advocates Consortium

Working with the Brotherhood of St Laurence and Sisterworks Inc to deliver Jobs Victoria Advocates program objective since June 2021. Advocates support anyone in the community looking for a pathway to employment or who needs employment-related supports.

In 12 months SLAC Jobs Victoria Advocate provided information, referral and follow ups for more than 500 people in the City of Greater Dandenong. Most of these people were the food aid clients at CoCO's.



The example of great engagement

The Jobs Victoria Advocate was working out of CoCO's helping a customer who came to collect the purchased couch. They ended up chatting and it turned out that the customer manages a business that was in need of workers/staff. The customer complained how difficult it was to find the right people to work. The Advocate helped to load the couch and took the contact details. The Advocate followed up in a couple of days and helped the business to register on Sidekicker. After another few days, the Advocate met with a client who recently lost his driver's license, was no longer able to travel to work and consequently, lost his job.

The Advocate referred the client to the Chisholm Skills and Jobs Centre to have his resume updated and recommended to apply for that specific job via Sidekicker. The application was successful, thanks to the insights provided by the Advocate, the client was interviewed and was offered a job. The new job is within walking distance from where the client and his family live. It happened within two weeks since the Advocate met with the employer.

Our People

Committee of Management

Leah Douglas
David Hawkins
Bev Douglas
Adel Dafla
Tuan Tran
Ranka Trisic
Emma Sayegh
Angela Holl
Binita Maskey

SLAC and CoCO's Team

Elena Sheldon
Mariela Sonn
Dane Lao
Phiem Tran
Kay De La Rue
Karen De Franz
Ali Abd Ali
Litia Waisele

SLAC Learn Local Team

Megan Fisher
Louise Blakston
Hiba Rajab
Sondali Gunasekara
Shirin Safi
Farrukh Amina
Amina Alkozai
Brenton Neilsen
Susan McCracken
Geetha Kannangara
Lyndsay Margolis
Anupama PV

Volunteers

Milovan Manojlovic | Paul McHenry | Mark Nuske | Rohitha Perera | Shae Goodwin | Keith Gibbons | Andrew Wallen | Maria Moskva | Phala Kriv | Bela Rezmues | Ana Brcic | Chandra Piyaratha | Sharifa Bahrami | Miimetua Tuaiti | Zora | Samuel Carter | John Armstrong | Tarja | Nasim Jacob | Michelle Evans | Warren | Jarasi Asokumar | Peretiso Ahwa | George Harrak | Suzan Cox | Nur Kamaua | William Ochieng | Lili Nguyen | Melissa Monga | Raj Koyaakkude Hamilton Edmons | Ronald James | Chisholm

Chisholm Students

Tahera Hussani | Tamana Ghulam Husain | Noorulah Hanif
Other students: Warren | Neha Johns

Our thanks, good bye and best wishes to:

Christine Hermawan | Peter Hermawan | Ruth Robson | Laura Cerbus