



Marlborough  
Multicultural  
Centre  
many cultures. one home.



# ANNUAL REPORT

For the Period August 2022 - July 2023

# MMC Stories Aug 2022- July 2023

## **Our stories of integration, support, empowerment, and advocacy**

The following pages provide a glimpse into the transformative journey our organisation embarked upon from August 2022 to 2023. Amidst the winds of change, the heart and purpose of MMC have grown even stronger. Our unwavering commitment to fostering cultural integration in Blenheim and being a voice for the voiceless migrants has remained at the core of everything we do.

In the twilight of 2022, a new Board of Directors ushered in a pivotal moment for us, prompting a thoughtful reassessment and strategic alignment. As we turned this page, the narratives within this report are elegantly organized to mirror the pillars that shape our actions, initiatives, and programs.

From promoting unity to amplifying unheard voices, this report encapsulates our journey of empowerment, celebration, and advocacy. It's a testament to the shared stories that define us and the diverse cultures that enrich Marlborough.

### • **Integrating cultures**

In the event called "Fun Dance," which took place from July to December 2022, a vibrant fusion of cultures converged with the rhythms of Merengue, Salsa, and Bachata. This engaging and enriching activity brought together children, teenagers, and adults alike, creating a diverse and dynamic community of participants. Every Friday in the second half of 2022, people of all ages dived into the awesome world of Latin American dance.

Other activities that promoted and exploited the multiculturalism in Blenheim included, the cooking sessions with Tetra, where we learnt the healthy ways of Cambodian cuisine. A trip to the Wairau Bar was another example of how to integrate cultures through the passing of the stories of the early migrants that arrived in NZ, the trip ended with a visit to the museum. A perfect way to end a day of history and incredible stories. The multicultural evening at Café Delicias united Marlburian families and various cultures that contribute to the vibrant tapestry of Blenheim. Attendees showcased a wide array of talents, including dancing, performing, cooking, and much more. The year 2023 saw the birth of Folklore Workshops. Interactive sessions that focus on various aspects of Latin America traditional culture, and heritage. These workshops aim to preserve, celebrate, and educate participants about the folklore and traditional practices of a particular country or community through dances and music. The Kathak workshops where a young Indian lady is passing on the values and movements of this dance are other platform for cultural exchange.

Language Weeks Celebration: In 2023 we initiated the celebration of language weeks in accordance with the New Zealand calendar. During our morning tea sessions, we invite individuals from different ethnic groups to share their language and culture. They teach us about their language and share cultural aspects related to language. We have celebrated various languages during our Wednesday Morning tea. NZ sign language, Samoan language week, However, our attempt to celebrate Cook Islands language was hindered by the unavailability of attendees due to only two families being present in Blenheim.

### • **Community capacity building, leadership, and engagement**

Empowering Migrants in the Business Sector: We have established a collaboration with Business Trust Marlborough to provide expertise and knowledge about New Zealand business practices to our clients. Brian offers personalised assistance to each client and connects them with relevant business contacts. Two sessions have already been conducted, benefiting over 15 clients, and there is another cohort planned for the upcoming months. Feedback from the participants, representing various nationalities such as Kiwi, Chilean, Indian, Colombian, Argentinian, Zimbabwean, Malaysian, Hungarian, Korean, British, and Catalan, indicates how valuable their meetings with Brian have been. They highlight how he has consistently guided their business projects, connected them with business mentors, and motivated them to enhance their businesses and plans.

Empowering migrant women: Basic Car Mechanics sessions. In our vibrant community of female migrants, another exciting initiative took flight - It all began when a young Indian lady stepped forward, brimming with generosity and a desire to share her knowledge. She approached us with the idea of conducting sessions to teach women the fundamentals of their cars, empowering them to handle basic car issues with confidence. Two sessions with a total of 14 migrant women proved to be a resounding success, with participants expressing appreciation and a keen interest in delving deeper into such practical knowledge. This initiative served as a shining example of migrants coming together to uplift and empower one another within our close-knit community. This was also a great opportunity to promote the integration of cultures through welcoming the Rohingya women who have newly arrived in our community.

### • **Highlighting and endorsing the diverse cultures residing in Marlborough**

The 2023 Marlborough Multicultural Festival stands out as the paramount event demonstrating the significance of this endeavour for MMC. A remarkable turnout gathered to celebrate and embrace the vibrant cultures that collectively shape Marlborough. The festival encompassed a myriad of cultures, each enthusiastically joining our invitation. It was a captivating day filled with an array of colours, music, talents, diverse accents, and resounding support from Blenheim's families. Throughout 2023, MMC has been actively engaged in pivotal cultural events that foster integration and community bonding. Our presence not only marked moments like the Muslim Eid Mubarak celebration, Samoan Independence Day, Colombian Independence Day, the Dutch Orange Week and Unity Week but also underscored our resolute commitment to championing the diverse ethnic groups within our region.

## Weekly Morning Tea

Our morning teas are often the starting point for newcomers to Marlborough, providing friendship, support, advocacy and navigation to relevant agencies, to support people's settlement process as well as an opportunity to practise English.



## La Hora del Cuento

La Hora del Cuento keeps gaining popularity, and the new Library has played a significant role in drawing English-speaking kids to participate in this initiative as well!

## Baile Entretenido - Fun Dance

In "Fun Dance," to the rhythm of Merengue, Salsa, and Bachata, many cultures integrated with Latin America. Throughout the second semester of 2022.



**Bus Trip to The Wairau**



**Workshop by MNZ to restructure our strategic plan.**



**Supporting the celebration of the Chinese language week**



**Cultures getting together through an art workshop**



**Celebrating Chinese language week Chinese calligraphy**



**Cultures coming together to learn in Cooking with Tetra**



## The new Board of Directors at Marlborough Multicultural Centre



## Multicultural Evening



**Osmith Vides Contreras**  
Community Connector

**Sarah Wheldale**  
MMC Manager

**Marcelo Gonzalez**  
Cultural Events Manager



# Making Marlborough

The Migrant Story



*A new documentary film by Paul Davidson and Barbara Gibb*

At the premiere of the "Making Marlborough" documentary, an incredible collection of stories highlights the contributions of the migrants who have helped build Marlborough.



**Basic Car Mechanic**



**Unity Week**



**Frida Kahlo Art Workshop**



**Eid Celebration Muslim Community**



**Latin America Folklore Dances & Music Workshops**



**Orange Madness Dutch Community**



**Kathak Dances Workshops**



**Let's Talk About Business**



**Songkran Festival  
Thai New Year Celebration**





## International Language Week

International language week had 13 languages participating in a market-style display at Connect Church Hall, engaging over 60 attendees.

## The Samoan Language Week

The Samoans brought delight to attendees during this morning tea through their language, dances, food, and rich history.



## Kiribati Language Week

The Kiribati language was joyfully celebrated through songs, lessons on their alphabet, and helpful phrases.



## Earth Day Celebration

## Volunteer Week Celebration



## Multicultural Parade





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# 2023

## Marlborough Multicultural Festival 2023

A kaleidoscope of colours, sounds, sights and aromas transformed Pollard Park on Saturday, 04 March 2023 at the Marlborough Multicultural Festival hosted by the Marlborough Multicultural Centre.

Thousands of people joined us to celebrate our rich and diverse community. We enjoyed delicious ethnic foods, lovely typical dances and immersed into the rich variety of cultures that call Marlborough Home.

