

# Volunteering and Ethnic Communities

## A Dialogue with Ethnic Communities



**New Zealand Federation of  
Ethnic Councils Incorporated**





# **Volunteering and 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

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**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, reading 'Helen Clark'.

Helen Clark  
Prime Minister

## Foreword 2 New Zealand Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux

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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**

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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.

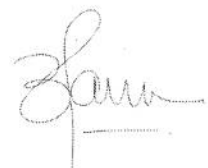
The Federation undertook this project when it became aware that people within Ethnic Communities were not putting themselves forward to volunteer in Aotearoa New Zealand. Statistics showed that the number of ethnic volunteers was very low compared to other groups. The Federation wanted to know the reasons 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

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### 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.

## 2.0 OBSERVATIONS & INTERPRETATIONS

### 2.1 Introduction

This report summarises the findings of five forums about volunteering, held with ethnic community members and volunteering representatives in Tauranga, Auckland, Christchurch, Nelson and Wellington.

The workshops were held as part of the Volunteering and Ethnic Communities Project, funded by the Community Development Group.

This report captures the salient points on barriers to volunteering and provides a lay-person's perspective of the overall concept of ethnic volunteering. It is, however, only a representative view and cannot be considered to represent a total and comprehensive account of all the issues facing the ethnic communities of New Zealand with regard to volunteering.

Owing to financial limitations, time constraints and the scope of the project, the dialogue with ethnic community members has been restricted to five centres around the country and interpretations are based on conversations with only a small proportion of the ethnic community of New Zealand who live in Tauranga, Christchurch, Auckland, Nelson and Wellington.

**Table shows forum participants and their country of origin**

Forum at	Number attended	Country of origin
Tauranga	16	Cook Islands, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines and Europe.
Christchurch	30	Japan, China, Singapore, Malaysia, Surinam, India, Fiji and England.
Auckland	36	Somalia, Burma, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Sri Lanka, Kosovo, Cook Islands, Tonga, India, Fiji, Malaysia and China.
Nelson	24	Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam, Myanmar, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea and Cambodia.
Wellington	37	Fiji, India, the Philippines, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Laos and Samoa.
Total	143	

Forum participants also included representatives from CABs and Volunteering Centres, and PEETO (Asia Pacific English Language College, Christchurch). These people are mostly Pakeha New Zealanders.

The project team notes that the issues raised at these forums confirm a number of key issues identified in the Ministry of Social Development's report *Volunteering and Ethnic Peoples in New Zealand*.

However, the barriers to volunteering identified at the forums and summarised in this report, together with suggested ways to move forward, do raise further questions about how mainstream New Zealand supports the genuine needs of ethnic communities.

## **2.2 Concept of Volunteering**

For most ethnic people, the concept of volunteering is quite different from the New Zealand mainstream idea of volunteering. Many ethnic people think of volunteering as the fulfilling of family and social obligations and responsibilities. These activities revolve around helping, sharing and giving, first to their own family, closely followed by their extended families, then to their own ethnic communities and finally to the wider community.

## **2.3 Motivation for Volunteering**

When ethnic people become involved in mainstream voluntary organisations, it is usually motivated by their own personal interest or choice. An example of this would be parents who become involved with school activities because their children attend the school.

## **2.4 Valuing Volunteers**

Ethnic volunteers perceive that their contributions are not valued by Voluntary Organisations, the wider New Zealand public and the Government.

The efforts of the Government to set up a Community and Voluntary Sector Office in the Ministry of Social Development, and other initiatives and work programmes, have not made an impact on ethnic communities.

## **2.5 Voluntary Organisations**

Many ethnic community members express a lack of awareness of voluntary organisations, and talk about having no information about these organisations. This is attributed to language difficulties, lack of interest and limited promotion about such organisations within ethnic communities.

The communication channels normally used by voluntary organisations are not always the most effective way of communicating with ethnic community members. Ethnic community members prefer direct, personal contact based on relationships rather than gathering information through written material, or impersonal means such as websites. Information is usually passed around members of ethnic communities by "word of mouth".

## **2.6 Culture of Voluntary Organisations**

Members of ethnic communities find the work environment in some voluntary organisations very challenging because of cultural and language differences and difficulties. Approaches and practices in most voluntary organisations are perceived by this group as being mono-cultural because these organisations appear to be run and managed by a certain group of people only.

## **2.7 Limitations of Voluntary Organisations**

Funding limitations and the lack of human resources for some voluntary organisations impact on their ability to support ethnic volunteers fully. Such organisations may not even have funds to reimburse out-of-pocket expenses that volunteers may incur.

## **2.8 Culture of Government**

A proportion of ethnic community members appears to be unsure that the Government will provide for them because Government strategies, policies and plans seem to change with each Government that comes into power.

In recent years there has been a shift in the emphasis of responsibility for the provision of relevant services from the state to the individual. Some examples are health and education.



Other social problems such as unemployment and inadequate housing have also become the responsibility of the individual, or the community.

Such changes in emphasis have meant ethnic members as well as other sections of New Zealand society have had to channel their energy and time into attempting to secure employment to provide adequately for their families and themselves.

Ethnic community members comment on the attitude and behaviour of government agencies. They say there is a general lack of understanding and awareness of the specific needs of ethnic people.

Government agencies are perceived to be using a "one size fits all" mentality when applying their policies and services to ethnic communities. For instance, refugees and migrants are treated in the same manner as everyone else, although their needs may be totally different. Forum participants say they have difficulty accessing information from government departments on legislation, regulations and services that are provided. They say the language used in documents and legislation is difficult to understand.

## **2.9 Cultural Differences**

Ethnic community members are aware that cultural differences are barriers to communication and integration into New Zealand society. They realise they have different world views and values from most New Zealanders. They realise they have to adapt their behaviour in certain situations and that they need to rethink the way they interpret the behaviour of others.

The wider New Zealand society also finds that they too have to accept differences and adapt to a changing social landscape.

Some of these cultural differences can be attributed to:

- Gender values
- Division of labour based on gender roles
- Position in the community
- Duty and obligation to one's family, and
- Religious values.

## **2.10 Social Prejudice**

Some ethnic people have to deal with social prejudice and discrimination at work, school and in their everyday dealings with other people in New Zealand. These experiences have become barriers to their involvement in mainstream volunteering activities in the wider community.

## **2.11 Communication Problems and Lack of Confidence**

The ethnic community identifies the following factors as contributing to the communication problems that exist between ethnic members and New Zealand society:

- Proficiency in English.
- Accent.
- Frame of reference.
- Colloquialism and slang.
- Body language

Ethnic people's difficulties with English and trauma from past experiences of war and famine have created a lack of self-confidence. They also feel challenged with the need to re-evaluate their own cultural perspectives to determine how best to fit in with New Zealand society.

### **2.12 Family Commitments**

Most ethnic members are not engaging in mainstream volunteering because their commitment to and responsibility for their families require the greatest proportion of their time, money and energy. They are committed to making sure that their families are provided for in the best way possible.

### **2.13 Community Groups – Focus and Limitations**

Many ethnic community members channel their efforts to meet the needs of their own communities and have not promoted mainstream volunteering.

Community groups such as Regional Ethnic Councils face funding limitations and lack the resources to develop services for their members. There is also a lack of capacity to develop expertise to manage and lead such groups.

## 3.0 BARRIERS TO VOLUNTEERING

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This section explores the barriers to volunteering based on discussions at the forums. The issues explicated in this section have been classified under the following key headings:

- 3.1 Personal Barriers.
- 3.2 Social Barriers.
- 3.3 Cultural Barriers.
- 3.4 Voluntary Organisation Barriers.
- 3.5 Government Barriers.

Comments and feedback from the ethnic community revealed that members were challenged by many issues in their endeavours to settle in New Zealand. Some struggled with the issues of settlement and providing for their families, while others were frustrated with the subtle and more obvious discrimination and prejudice they continually encountered in their daily lives. All these issues had an impact on their attitudes and motivation to volunteer in mainstream New Zealand.

### 3.1 Personal Barriers

**Individual circumstances and personal barriers to volunteering for ethnic people include:**

- **Confidence:**

- A lack of confidence and a fear of rejection.

- **Language:**

- A lack of proficiency in the English language.

*"I am worried that my English is not good enough and am not sure if I will be able to understand the other person."*

- **Local Culture:**

- An insufficient knowledge of the local culture.

*"Being new to New Zealand, I may not be able to answer questions or give advice."*

- **Social Contact**

- Social contact only with members of their own ethnic community is common because of a lack of confidence and self-esteem when dealing with wider society.

- **Cost of Volunteering:**

- Personal financial factors.
  - Time factors.

- **Family Commitment:**

- Strong family commitment.

*"Need to find work and attend to family needs."*

*"Low income and need to keep looking for paid jobs."*

*"First priority is working and establishing themselves and their family."*

*"Who will look after the children?"*

*"Need to fit volunteering around care for elderly parents."*

### **How the community and voluntary organisations create personal barriers to volunteering for ethnic people:**

- **Disharmony in Ethnic Communities:**

- Dissatisfaction with community leadership
- Internal strife and factionalism within the community.

- **Information:**

- A lack of information on volunteering and volunteer organisations.

*"Ethnic communities have very little contact with the voluntary organisations."*

*"The limited availability of materials on volunteer organisations in way ethnic communities can understand."*

*"volunteer organisation requirements are not stated in a way that can be understood readily by ethnic communities."*

## **3.2 Social Barriers**

### **How the individual circumstances of ethnic people create social barriers to volunteering:**

- **Settling in New Zealand**

- Newly arrived refugees lack information about the laws and New Zealand ways.

*"No-one really teaches us the Kiwi way of doing things."*

- They are unable to contribute as volunteers until they understand and come to terms with information about day-to-day life in New Zealand.

*"Need local knowledge of where schools are, best doctors, and closest shops; when is rubbish day; when does the milk man come..."*

- **Socially "Acceptable" Behaviour**

- Uncertainties about appropriate social behaviour and norms.

*"I'm not sure how to express my special needs – vegetarian, halal and kosher food. What do I say when I have my monthly period and I'm not allowed to help?"*



- **Getting it Right**

- The apprehension or fear of “getting it wrong” is often the underlying reason for the reluctance to volunteer.

*“In Japan, there is a way to do everything. I worry that I may not do things in the right way in New Zealand.”*

- **Communication**

- Communication difficulties were attributed to the following factors:

- Proficiency in English.
- Accent.
- Frame of reference.
- Colloquialism and slang.
- Body language.

**How the community and voluntary organisations contribute to the social barriers to ethnic people volunteering:**

- **Voluntary organisation Issues**

- Some volunteers in organisations avoid contact with members of ethnic communities because they find it difficult to cope with differences.

*“Some voluntary organisations make it difficult for volunteers who have English as their second language.”*

- **Settlement Issues**

- English is a second language to many immigrants. Most New Zealanders only know one language and they expect everyone to communicate in that language. In most countries people speak at least two languages.
- Immigrants are required to have some level of language competency.
- Refugees do not need to meet language or educational requirements to enter New Zealand. However, there is no recognition of this once they arrive and seek employment.
- Refugees have little or no educational opportunities during the time they spend in the refugee camps.
- Migrants and refugees see volunteering as a way of gaining successful paid employment.
- The number of refugees who volunteer is very small compared with other migrants.
- Refugee women are the worst affected by discrimination, unemployment and access to services in comparison with all migrants. The Government is not doing enough to tackle poverty and mental health issues.
- Lack of assistance by the Government for educational and employment opportunities.

- **Resources**
  - Voluntary organisations' lack of resources.

### 3.3 Cultural Barriers

Individual circumstances and cultural barriers to volunteering for ethnic people include:

- **Cultural Awareness**
  - Kiwi cultural insensitivity to ethnic people.
  - A lack of understanding of ethnic customs leads to lack of tolerance and respect.
- **Gender Values**
  - The customary rights and values of an ethnic volunteer may make it difficult for them to work with different age groups or genders.
  - For example, in some cultures, women will not feel comfortable working with men. Men may also find it difficult to take directions from women. Or an older ethnic person may not take too kindly to criticisms from a younger person or a woman.
- **Gender Roles**
  - In ethnic society men are expected to work in management and administrative roles and women to support them as homemakers. Such traditions may have positive results from a community perspective and contribute to harmony. Such values are, however, frowned upon by mainstream New Zealand.
- **Societal Status**
  - In the ethnic community, members observe the practice of keeping one's "place and standing" (status) in the community.
  - Some elders in the community would not welcome being asked to do menial tasks by junior members of the community.
- **Duty and Obligation**
  - Duty and obligation to extended family need to be fulfilled.  
*"Because my Aunty and Uncle were our sponsors to come to New Zealand, we feel a deep sense of obligation to them and we will try and fulfil any favours they ask of us. This obligation and responsibility does not stop with us, but is passed on to our children as well."*
- **Religious Practices**
  - Religion is sometimes perceived as a barrier because practices in New Zealand do not always give importance to this dimension of one's life.
  - Ethnic community spiritual beliefs vary, but these beliefs have relatively little place in the workplace or volunteer environment and this makes ethnic people feel inferior and not valued.

**Community and voluntary organisation cultural barriers to volunteering by ethnic people include:**

- **The New Zealand Attitude**
  - Many New Zealanders find it hard to understand the cultural differences of ethnic communities. The reluctance of an ethnic person to volunteer in a particular job is interpreted as the ethnic person being very fussy and choosy.
- **Treaty Issues**
  - There are concerns over Treaty of Waitangi issues within ethnic communities. Members of the ethnic community feel very strongly that in all its deliberations the Government has not consulted them on this matter. At the same time they are expected to acknowledge something they are not supported to understand, or apply in practice.
  - Members of the ethnic community view all New Zealanders as one people and therefore are unable to understand the existing fragile relationship(s) between the Government and Maori.
  - Ethnic communities are anxious to understand how to respond appropriately to these issues.
- **Cultural Issues**
  - Forum participants express strong views that voluntary organisations need to demonstrate greater cultural sensitivity in their dealings with ethnic volunteers and ethnic communities.
- **Preconceived Notions**
  - Preconceived notions make it difficult to build relationships and they become a barrier to communication in workplaces.

**Government barriers to ethnic people volunteering include:**

- **Racial Discrimination**
  - The ethnic community expresses concern that there is very little strategy from central Government to tackle the problems of racial discrimination and prejudice in the volunteer sector and in paid employment.
  - The Government must take the prime responsibility of funding ethnic community projects focused on educating ethnic communities.

### 3.4 Voluntary Organisation Barriers

#### How voluntary organisations erect barriers to individual ethnic volunteers:

- **Acknowledgement**

- Strong views are expressed by forum participants that there is little appreciation of the efforts and work of volunteers by mainstream New Zealand.
- Members of ethnic communities are frustrated that their efforts as volunteers are unnoticed, and undervalued by the leaders of their own communities, by voluntary organisations and by the Government.

*"There is a lack of feedback, recognition and acknowledgement of what you do as a volunteer from the agency and the wider public."*

- **Mono-Cultural Practices and Prejudice**

- The ethnic volunteer who may already be struggling with personal issues such as a lack of confidence finds it very difficult to be the only one who is different in a mono-cultural environment.
- When members of the public show reluctance to accept the services of an ethnic volunteer it greatly discourages the ethnic volunteer. The voluntary organisation may also not know how to deal with the volunteer.

*"We had an ethnic volunteer but because the public could not understand her we thought the best solution at the time was to let her go. If only we had persevered and used her in another area of work within the organisation."*

- **Low Confidence**

- Ethnic volunteers express concerns about the way their skills, knowledge and work experiences have been utilised by management of voluntary organisations. They feel that their skills are underutilised and underrated because the voluntary organisation doesn't know how to involve them, or utilise their skills and work experience appropriately.
- Members of the ethnic communities perceive this as a sign of no confidence and trust in them.
- There was a lack of consultation and communication with them directly, or through Regional Ethnic Councils. Such communication was non-existent or limited at best.

*"Agencies do not know how to use the resources and skills of ethnic volunteers."*

*"Staff in organisations often ask for volunteers and then give them no responsibilities (even though) they are highly qualified."*

*"Lack of confidence from voluntary organisations of what a new ethnic volunteer can do – giving ethnic volunteers menial jobs that do not match their abilities and skills."*



- **Volunteering Concept**
  - Many of the ethnic communities living in New Zealand come from backgrounds where their concept of volunteering is based on the concept of “sharing, caring and helping”. Their involvement is very much linked to working within their own communities, based on a network of relationships that has a common identity and usually a common interest.
- **Fear of Being Misunderstood**
  - The volunteers or management in an organisation on the other hand might be afraid of appearing to be condescending towards the ethnic volunteer and therefore try not to do anything that could be misconstrued.

### 3.5 Government Barriers

**Government barriers to individual ethnic volunteering include:**

- **Settlement Priorities**
  - The first priority of many new migrants is gaining employment to provide for their families.
  - They are concerned about the education and employment opportunities for their families. The concepts of volunteering with new migrants have not been well thought through in Government policies.
- **Changing Governments**
  - Political changes after election instil a sense of insecurity in ethnic people. The constant need to adapt to changes is new to many migrants.
- **Funding Limitations**
  - In many voluntary organisations, lack of resources is a major barrier to recruiting and training ethnic volunteers. Besides basic training, time, energy and money are required to support ethnic community members until they became more confident as volunteers.
- **Funding Allocation and Distribution**
  - The processes through which funding is provided, distributed and allocated are very limiting. As voluntary organisations compete for the little funding available, many organisations find that they have insufficient funds for administration or compliance costs. Many voluntary organisations spend considerable time and effort seeking funding and support. Thus less time is available for recruiting, training and mentoring ethnic volunteers.
- **Lack of Value**
  - The Government is perceived as not valuing ethnic volunteers' contributions to economic and social well-being. They say that the Government needs to give greater acknowledgement of and recognition to the work of volunteers.

## **4.0 OVERCOMING BARRIERS**

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This section explores suggestions and ideas to overcome the barriers to volunteering presented in section two under the following categories:

- 4.1 Personal barriers.
- 4.2 Social barriers.
- 4.3 Cultural barriers.
- 4.4 Voluntary Organisation barriers.
- 4.5 Government barriers.

Ethnic communities understand the challenges that the Tangata Whenua and the wider New Zealand public face with an ever-changing social climate in New Zealand. They also realise that as new settlers to New Zealand, it is important to integrate well and quickly into society.

The suggestions offered by ethnic communities for overcoming barriers are directed not just at the voluntary organisations and the Government but also at themselves and their communities.

Changes in attitudes and skill levels need to take place within the community and the ethnic individual before they can successfully engage in mainstream volunteering.

### **4.1 Overcoming Personal Barriers**

#### **Overcoming the personal barriers for individual ethnic people volunteering**

- **Self-Improvement**
  - Utilise opportunities for self-improvement.
  - Exhaust educational training opportunities.
- **Language**
  - Attend and access English language classes (ESOL).
- **Get Involved**
  - Get involved in community work.
  - Volunteer in pairs or with families.

**Ethnic communities and voluntary organisations can help overcome personal barriers for ethnic volunteers by:**

- **Promoting the Needs of Ethnic Groups**
  - The ethnic community could promote the need of ethnic groups for greater awareness of volunteering.
- **Promoting Volunteering Within the Ethnic Community**
  - The ethnic community could encourage volunteering activities by:
    - Organising forums and seminars to introduce their members to different voluntary organisations
    - Providing certificates of appreciation and awards to those involved in volunteer work

- Highlighting the experiences and stories of volunteers in community newsletters and other ethnic media
- Setting an example by community leaders volunteering
- Being champions for voluntary organisations
- Encouraging their communities to use the services of voluntary organisations, and
- Working with such organisations to develop relevant training modules.

- **Voluntary Organisation Endeavours**

- In order to encourage the ethnic individual to be involved in volunteering, voluntary organisations must look at ways of promoting their organisations, their services and their need for volunteers. Information needs to be accessible and easily understood by ethnic communities.
- Voluntary organisations are encouraged to find out the preferred method of communication among ethnic people.
- Distribute pamphlets and brochures with colourful and simple diagrams/pictures to assist in understanding relevant messages.
- Provide opportunities for mothers to bring their children to their workplaces or situations where families can volunteer together.

### **How the Government can help overcome personal barriers to ethnic people volunteering:**

- **Government Endeavours**

- Ethnic communities suggest that the Government consider ways of promoting volunteering and the benefits of volunteering among ethnic people.
- A video presentation on volunteering in New Zealand could be made available through the public libraries for ethnic communities to use during community meetings.
- One day or week each year could be dedicated to promoting volunteering.
- Acknowledge and value volunteers by recognising the work and the time given by them, and the skills and training received by the volunteer.
- Encourage employers to consider volunteering experience as part of work experience in New Zealand.

## **4.2 Overcoming Social Barriers**

- **Individual Endeavours**

- Some ways to overcome social barriers are to:
  - Speak out against discrimination
  - Be bold enough to communicate, and
  - Seek help and support.

- **Community Endeavours**

- The ethnic community can overcome social barriers by:
  - Networking with other organisations and communities to overcome some of their settlement issues
  - Setting up a buddy system to help a newly arrived ethnic person
  - Providing information for their members
  - Taking responsibility for social problems in their community
  - Providing free space to voluntary organisations for advertising
  - Inviting voluntary organisations to ethnic festivals and cultural events, and
  - Visiting and entering into dialogues with other volunteer organisations.

- **Voluntary Organisation Endeavours**

- To encourage ethnic community members to engage in volunteering, voluntary organisations need to:
  - Foster relationships with the ethnic communities
  - Get to know the leaders and the communities
  - Understand and be aware of social and cultural barriers
  - Show a more caring attitude, and
  - Be more tolerant.

- **Government Endeavours**

- The Government must foster good relationships between themselves and ethnic communities.
- The Government needs to provide avenues for dialogue and discussions on issues of ethnic concern.
- Government agencies need to be accessible and easily contactable.

- **Strategies for Settlement**

- The Government needs to develop policies and strategies to overcome some of the issues regarding the employment, immigration and health-care of ethnic people.
- There is a need for orientation programmes to give new settlers information, help and support to assist them in the settlement process.

- **Language Lessons**

- The Government must provide sufficient funding to ethnic communities for more accessible and affordable English language lessons.

#### **4.3 Overcoming Cultural Barriers**

- **Individual Endeavours**

- An ethnic person can contribute to overcoming cultural barriers through:
  - Getting to know the neighbours, and
  - Adopting a positive attitude towards New Zealand culture by making efforts to integrate.

- **Community Endeavours**

- The ethnic communities can foster better cultural understanding through:
  - Raising public awareness of cross-cultural diversity through interaction
  - Promoting their own culture
  - Promoting cultural sensitivity through cultural exchange
  - Promoting interaction with the wider New Zealand community, and
  - Providing guidelines on relevant cultural issues.

- **Voluntary organisation Endeavours**

- To foster cultural understanding and tolerance volunteer organisations need to:
  - Encourage ethnic people to practise their own cultures, and
  - Consult with ethnic community members to develop guidelines and training modules that will reflect ethnic cultural sensitivities and demonstrate cultural sensitivity by understanding ethnic cultural dos and don'ts.

- **Government Endeavours**

- To overcome cultural barriers to volunteering, the Government must:
  - Promote cross-cultural education
  - Pave the way for the teaching of cultural diversity in schools, and



- Provide information packs on New Zealand's way of life for all newcomers and new immigrants.

#### **4.4 Overcoming Voluntary Organisation Barriers**

- **Individual Endeavours**

- Ethnic people need to:
  - Increase their knowledge of voluntary organisations by attending forums and participating in seminars to gather as much information as possible
  - Visit the offices of these organisations and have first-hand experience of the work that the organisations do before getting on board
  - Know their rights and responsibilities as a volunteer
  - Have a non-judgemental attitude towards others and acknowledge the differences that exist between people of different cultural, racial, educational and economic backgrounds, and
  - Promote volunteering to others.

- **Community Endeavours**

- The ethnic community must increase its efforts to:
  - Promote "volunteering the New Zealand way" to their people at national, local and community levels
  - Use orientation settlement programmes to promote volunteering, and
  - Conduct more research to understand barriers to volunteering among ethnic men and youth.

- **Voluntary Organisation Endeavours**

- To overcome barriers, voluntary organisations:
  - Are urged to make contact with ethnic communities
  - Should pass on information and get involved with the community in other ways
  - Should recruit ethnic volunteers and train them in a way that is relevant for the organisations
  - Should improve their management and governance using business systems that help people make financial statements, write letters, make funding applications, etc, and
  - Should co-operate with each other by sharing resources and databases of volunteers.

- **Government Endeavours**

- To support volunteering within Ethnic Communities:

- The Government must allocate more funding to voluntary organisations so that they can improve the services they provide and modify and develop the training they can give to volunteers as well as promote their organisations.
    - The Government should set up an agency to provide resource support for community groups and voluntary organisations.
    - The Government is also urged to involve voluntary organisations where policies and procedures are put in place to help the management of voluntary organisations.

#### **4.5 Overcoming Government Barriers**

- **Individual Endeavours**

- Ethnic people need to:

- Use existing services to seek help from other members of the community, voluntary organisations or government agencies, and
    - Participate in the consultation process that the Government provides and make submissions if they have issues they want dealt with.

- **Ethnic Community Endeavours**

- Ethnic communities must actively participate in any forums, seminars and consultations that the Government initiates.
  - They need to make submissions to the Government about the needs and concerns of the communities. They also need to make relevant recommendations to deal with community issues.
  - They should support the New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Council so that as a national body, the Federation can speak for ethnic communities.
  - The Federation must promote the ethnic cause to central Government.
  - Ethnic communities must get involved with policy-making and strategic planning at local and Government levels.

- **Voluntary Organisation Endeavours**

- Voluntary organisations must make submissions to the Government about increasing the awareness of volunteerism in New Zealand and suggest ways of promoting volunteering.
  - Voluntary organisations can also make suggestions about the way funds are allocated, provided and distributed to Voluntary Organisations.
  - Voluntary organisations must support any plans that the Government has that may improve organisational circumstances.
  - Voluntary organisations are also urged to support the setting up of one-stop shops that will provide a variety of services that the New Zealand public can easily access.

- **Government Endeavours**

- Actively promote volunteering in ethnic communities
- Undertake an impact assessment of policies, practices and legislation that are barriers to ethnic volunteering
- Support voluntary organisations through sufficient funding and a more balanced way of allocating and distributing funds
- Address the settlement issues of new settlers
- Review its information channels to ethnic communities
- Develop strategies and policies to overcome racial prejudice, and
- Consider ways of promoting and celebrating cultural diversity and understanding of ethnic New Zealand cultures.

## 5.0 MOVING FORWARD

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This section presents recommendations based on ideas presented by forum participants.

The recommendations aim to generate further consultation and opportunities to influence and make input to policy development. It is hoped these recommendations will form a basis for future strategic planning as it relates directly to volunteering, volunteering in ethnic communities groups and Voluntary Organisations.

It is imperative to note that:

- The Government is also continually reviewing legislation and introducing new programmes to meet current needs to deal with changes within the Government, Voluntary Organisations and ethnic communities, and
- Some of the recommendations cannot be implemented unless appropriate and sufficient funding is obtained.

The recommendations offered are categorised as follows:

- 5.1 Moving forward for individuals in ethnic communities
- 5.2 Moving forward for ethnic communities
- 5.3 Moving forward for voluntary organisations.
- 5.4 Moving forward for Government

### 5.1 Moving Forward for Individuals in Ethnic Communities

1. **Establish ethnic community networks:** Ethnic people should be encouraged to network with their own community volunteers to get initial assistance and support as they settle into the country.
2. **Continuously debate volunteering issues:** Communication and debate must be centred on an approach that includes New Zealanders of all walks of life. Discussion must identify small, actionable steps each community can take to bring down the barriers to volunteering.
3. **Actively get information from support and voluntary agencies:** This will help ethnic people learn about the different way of life here in New Zealand.
4. **Actively retrain and learn:** Ethnic people should be encouraged to take advantage of the educational opportunities available to improve skills and knowledge.

### 5.2 Moving Forward for Ethnic Communities

1. **Establish host community support networks for new ethnic settlers seeking information on volunteering:** The Regional Ethnic Councils, Refugee and Migrant Resource Centres and local CABs should be the first point of contact.
2. **Host community support networks must acknowledge the Treaty of Waitangi:** Foster understanding of other cultures, including Maori culture, by building a relationship with the local Tangata Whenua and working towards promoting an understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi as it relates to volunteering and other activities in New Zealand.

3. **Host community support networks should promote key messages about volunteering using "word of mouth":** Prepare captions and phrases that can be used in ethnic communities to promote volunteering the "Kiwi way" to the members of their community through Regional Ethnic Councils, Refugee and Migrant Resource Centres and local CABs.
4. **Acknowledge volunteers:** Offer recognition and acknowledgement to volunteers in ethnic communities and celebrate positive stories of ethnic communities' endeavours and the successes of individuals.
5. **Take a more organised approach to relationships with Volunteer Organisations:** Establish and maintain effective relationships with voluntary organisations through inviting their participation and involvement in ethnic community activities and festivities.
6. **Participate in public dialogue and the submission process:** Actively make submissions to the Government about improving the awareness of volunteering and the acknowledgement of the work of volunteers at national level.
7. **Conduct promotions:** Find free advertising space for voluntary organisations in community and national newspapers.
8. **Maintain a database:** Build a database of ethnic community members with expertise, skills and experience that may be of use to voluntary organisations.
9. **Mentoring:** Ask senior members of ethnic communities to offer guidance and assistance to new members and provide links between the wider New Zealand community, ethnic communities and the Government.
10. **Inter-community networking:** Network with other ethnic communities.
11. **Have your say:** Participate actively in dialogue and consultation opportunities.
12. **Prepare and maintain guidelines:** Provide guidelines for voluntary organisations to use, especially in issues of engaging and recruiting ethnic volunteers and dealing with cultural differences.

### 5.3 Moving Forward for Voluntary Organisations

1. **Network with ethnic communities:** Actively investigate opportunities to network with ethnic communities. Build a working relationship with them and determine the appropriate way to communicate. Examples of ways this could be done include visiting ethnic communities during their festival days, using opportunities of promoting Voluntary Organisations through ethnic media and conducting introductory seminars for the ethnic community.
2. **Actively encourage ethnic participation:** Review current recruitment procedures and training methods especially for ethnic people. Provide access for ethnic communities with translated brochures and resources. Make practices and work attitudes in the organisation culturally acceptable. Share resources and information with other Voluntary Organisations.



- 3 **Ensure a planned approach:** Activities such as seeking funding, seeking volunteers, developing codes of practice, language training, funding allocation and distribution, and making submissions to the Government must be carefully planned. Funding is needed to develop training programmes on culturally acceptable practices and volunteers are needed who have the skills, knowledge and experience to improve organisational management. Volunteers need to know exactly what is expected of them and ethnic volunteers who are not proficient in English need access to language training. The awareness of volunteering needs to be raised and the work of volunteers at national levels need to be acknowledged.

#### 5.4 **Moving Forward for Government**

1. **Review the criteria for funding and resource allocation and distribution** to improve outcomes and outputs that specifically benefit volunteering in ethnic communities.
2. **Actively acknowledge volunteer efforts in ethnic communities.**
3. **Ensure that Voluntary Organisations adopt culturally acceptable practices** and ensure that funds to make this change are available.
4. **Remove racial barriers in legislation, policy and practice.**
5. **Undertake meaningful dialogue with ethnic communities and Voluntary Organisations** that leads to tangible outputs.
6. **Ensure appropriate legal protection, health and safety for volunteers** in ethnic communities.
7. **Undertake early consultation with ethnic communities** during the process of key strategic planning and policy-making that impact on ethnic communities.
8. **Continue to make addressing settlement issues a key priority.**
9. **Provide centralised information on New Zealand life and society** for ethnic people.

**New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils Incorporated**

P. O. Box 1409, Wellington, New Zealand

Web: [www.nzfec.org.nz](http://www.nzfec.org.nz)