

1. Working with CALD communities

Australia is one of the world's most multicultural countries, with 49% of its population born overseas. Since 1945, Australia has welcomed 7.5 million immigrants from all around the world. Even though Australia is the world-leading example of diversity, individuals of different ethnicities are nevertheless seen as a threat to the larger Australian community. In a study conducted by the Lowy Institute in 2018, 40% of Australians viewed new arrivals, including migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, as a severe threat to the country. Due to security and culture shock, newly arrived migrants always attempt to integrate into their communities; for example, Indian migrants seek out the Indian community, while Vietnamese migrants would appear to integrate into Vietnamese society. There are pockets of multicultural communities across Australia, and we must grasp the culture and dynamics of these groups if we are to communicate the gospel with them. The proposed resource will present the Intercultural ministry's eight-year experience and lessons gained. It will provide insight into how to share the gospel, create faith pathways and support discipleship for those from CALD communities

2. Understanding terminologies

Before engaging with CALD communities who have come to Australia for various reasons, the terminology must be grasped. A person might be a migrant, a refugee, or an asylum seeker. Understanding terminology and the policies imposed will aid in communication as well as the identification of pathways that will help in the integration of new arrivals.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)

The term "culturally and linguistically diverse" (CALD) is widely used to characterise persons with cultural backgrounds that differ from the majority of people in the mainstream Anglo-Australian society.

Discipleship in a Intercultural Context



Intercultural & All Abilities Team

Migrants

Migrants are persons who have willingly left their home country in search of a better life for a variety of personal and economic reasons. They have taken the decision to leave, have had the opportunity to plan and prepare for migration, and can typically return at any time. Each year, the Department of foreign affairs allocate specific migration slots, with a strong focus on bringing in migrants with appropriate skills to supplement Australia's labour market requirements and skill shortages.

Asylum seekers

An asylum seeker is someone who has sought recognition and protection as a refugee (in Australia, this is referred to as a Protection visa applicant) but has yet to receive a final decision on their application. Some people seek asylum in Australia after arriving on a visitor's or student's visa, while others enter without a valid visa. A permanent Protection visa is granted to asylum seekers who fulfil the health, character, and security requirements and are deemed to be entitled to Australia's protection under the Refugees Convention. Not all asylum applicants will be considered refugees in the end.

Refugees

A refugee, according to the United Nations, is a person who is "outside the country of his (or her) nationality due to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion and is unable or unwilling to avail himself (or herself) of the protection of that country." Unlike migrants who choose to leave their own country, Refugees are compelled to escape to survive. Furthermore, refugees do not have the same opportunity as migrants to plan their relocation to Australia, and they may never be able to return home.

3. Building relationships

The cornerstone of building a relationship is unconditional love for one another, which entails viewing others as equals and loving them as Jesus loved and cared for us. Relationship building is vital in sharing the gospel, and the first step towards doing so is to comprehend collectivist cultures and critically reflect on one's own assumptions and stereotypes that have developed through time.

4. Understanding unconscious bias

Assuming similarity, in which one views other people with identical necessities for food, shelter, and clothing while neglecting the uniqueness of different cultures, is one of the primary barriers to a culturally sensitive approach. The ecological danger of cultural essentialism is addressed through diversity. Recognising diversity and diverse worldviews is critical to overcoming unconscious prejudice. Preconceptions and stereotypes about the CALD community are a stumbling block to building connections that can lead to salvation and discipleship.

Case study: A retired officer in a Corps asked a soldier of a different ethnicity to stand and collect instead of other corps members at the marketplaces. The officer pushed for this person of different ethnicity to do fundraising based on the officer's assumption that people from the global south or eastern nations are typically impoverished, which would result in a significant sum of money being raised. The preconception that people with different cultures and colours are generally poor resulted in irreparable damage and a stumbling block to cross-cultural communication and relationships. Respecting and understanding diversity is critical in sharing the gospel and making disciples.

For more information on stumbling blocks to cross-cultural communication, please see [http://pharmacy304.pbworks.com/f/Barna,+L.M.+\(1994\).pdf](http://pharmacy304.pbworks.com/f/Barna,+L.M.+(1994).pdf)

5. Individualism and collectivism

Individualism and collectivism are cultural dimensions that describe Australians' and other ethnic cultures' behaviour and communication habits. Australia receives a score of 90 on Hofstede's Collectivism – Individualism measure, indicating an individualistic society. In his 6-D model of national culture, Hofstede uses a physics metaphor to describe individuality. Individualistic societies, according to Hofstede, are like atoms floating around in gas, whereas collectivist societies are like atoms in a crystal. Individualistic cultures, such as Australia's, value independence over interdependence (Hofstede 6-d model, 2010). For more information on the difference between individualistic and collectivist societies, please see <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country/australia/>

Case study: At a music programme, an officer got the opportunity to meet a collectivist culture individual. Instead of running the programme, the officer focuses on maintaining frequent contact with the participants. Because the officer knew both individualistic and collectivist cultures, she quickly connected with the participant and developed a relationship. Their friendship evolved to the point that they met outside of the programme at home and in cafes. Eventually, the participant learned about Jesus, which led to her salvation. She took an interest in the bible and desired to study and learn more about it, so the discipleship process began with weekly meetings in which the passage was discussed interactively.

6. Discipleship in the Intercultural Context

For effective discipleship, it is critical to keep Jesus apart from religion. Discipleship lessons are solely focused on Jesus and his teachings. Most people of many ethnicities have come from religion with strict laws and institutions that irritate them. Therefore, Jesus gives people an opportunity to break free from those bondages, resulting in an eternal faith in Jesus. The goal of discipleship is not to convert individuals from one religion to another but to absorb Jesus' teachings to become a better person, resulting in a better society.

Case study: An individual from an Islamic background became a follower of Jesus and began attending weekly discipleship meetings to learn more about him. At one of the discipleship groups, one of the soldiers started pressuring this individual to attend Sunday church service. He was pushed to the point where he stated that he saw no difference between Islam and Christianity because both have identical rules, restrictions, and at times, guilt imposed, such as the requirement to attend Sunday services. He questioned whether his salvation was contingent on his attendance at Sunday worship. The discipleship meetings are a church within themselves, where individuals gather solely to learn about Jesus. The individual became more faithful to Jesus, and as a result of the mid-week sessions, he also chose to become a soldier. The soldiership ceremony was held on Tuesday rather than Sunday as part of a weekly bible study group. When conducting discipleship lessons with individuals of different religions, it's vital to keep religion distinct from Jesus since the goal isn't to create a new religion for them but to raise consciousness through Jesus to be excellent examples of Jesus ideals in society.

7. An example of how to run a Discipleship session

Discipleship lessons are kept short, with a small passage containing a minimum of ten questions. The questions allow for an interactive session which gives people the ability to explore Jesus. A chapter may take two to three weeks to complete, but it's vital to take it slowly so that people have time to reflect on the passage critically. Since English language competence aids NESB (non-English speaking background) people integrate effectively into Australian society, discipleship lessons and meetings are conducted in English to improve English writing and conversation abilities. If a translation is required, a member of the same community can be approached to translate the lessons.

Case study: A weekly discipleship gathering in one of the mission expressions attracts people from all nations and languages. The study is conducted in English, but because few Persians from Iran speak English well, the lesson is given to them a week ahead of time, and then an individual who

is fluent in both Persian and English helps the rest of the community comprehend the lesson. The prepared lesson is brief, with numerous questions, and written in simple English.

Luke 8:40-56

40 Now, when Jesus returned, a crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him. 41 Then a man named Jairus, a synagogue leader, came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with him to come to his house 42 because his only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying.

- 1) From where did Jesus' return?
- 2) Why was he greeted so warmly by the crowd? Who was it that Jesus saw?
- 3) What was his reason for pleading with Jesus to come to his house?

As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. 43 And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. 44 She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped. 45 "Who touched me?" Jesus asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you." 46 But Jesus said, "Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me."

- 4) Whom did Jesus come into contact with?
- 5) How did he know he had been touched?

47 Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. 48 Then he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace."

- 6) Why was the woman trembling?
- 7) What caused her to be quickly healed? What was Jesus' response to her?

Discipleship in a Intercultural Context



Intercultural & All Abilities Team

49 While Jesus was still speaking, someone came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. “Your daughter is dead,” he said. “Don’t bother the teacher anymore.” 50 Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, “Don’t be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed.”

8) What did Jesus learn from Jairus’ family?

9) What was Jesus’ response to Jairus?

51 When he arrived at the house of Jairus, he did not let anyone go in with him except Peter, John and James, and the child’s father and mother. 52 Meanwhile, all the people were wailing and mourning for her. “Stop wailing,” Jesus said. “She is not dead but asleep.” 53 They laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. 54 But he took her by the hand and said, “My child, get up!” 55 Her spirit returned, and at once, she stood up.

10) What did Jesus have to say to the bereaved? Why did they make fun of him?

11) How did Jesus’ act?

Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat. 56 Her parents were astonished, but he ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened.

12) What did Jesus say to the parents of the child?

13) What did Jesus instruct them to do? Why?

14) What do we learn from the passage?

The discipleship lessons are an opportunity for people to explore and critically reflect on what has been learnt and how it can help further in strengthening their faith in Jesus.

Please contact the Intercultural and All Abilities team at intercultural@salvationarmy.org.au if you have any questions regarding this resource.

Discipleship in a Intercultural Context



Intercultural & All Abilities Team