



CASE STUDY: African Chef

MARSS promotes client focused programs for refugees and migrants.

AT A GLANCE



Target Participants
Migrants and Refugees



Aim
To provide basic skills and knowledge regarding food and nutrition.



Organisations Involved
Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services of the ACT Inc (MARSS)



Location
Canberra, Australia



Funding
MARSS

Cooking skills for African men

The 'African Chef' program was born out of a need for nutritional support for African men. It was evident that many of our male clients' from Africa were lacking in basic skills and knowledge regarding food and nutrition. This was particularly an issue impacting on the health and wellbeing of our young African clients', who were often living alone or with other young male family members. With integration into Australian society and the changing of traditional family structures and roles, this resulted in a greater need for men to be involved in the food preparation and cooking in the family home.

In a series of information and cooking sessions, the program participants are provided with nutritional information, taken on a supermarket tour and discussed the different varieties of foods, as well as the different ways to prepare and cook the different food varieties. The participants learn about menu planning, preparation, cooking and serving of food, and all aspects of food safety; including cross contamination safe food storage and cleaning. Typical cooking sessions involve volunteer instructors, and 2 recipes for simple and nutritious meals.

Recognising that many of the participants have low levels of written English proficiency, the recipes taught are very simple, and not reliant on exact measurements. The recipes are also adaptable, and participants discuss possible alternative ingredients used in the class.

The program is very client focused, and the clients' have been involved in every aspect of the planning of the program. Classes are held at convenient times and locations, and the recipes that are taught are directed by the participants themselves. The continual input by the participants gives them a sense of ownership of the program and empowers them in commencing to make healthy and practical food choices for themselves. It is interesting to note that western style foods are those most favoured by the group, however it is also the intention to promote their own culture by seeking traditional recipes and cooking instructors to be included in the program.

The program is increasingly popular and it is anticipated that it will continue to run in various forms in the future. The women in the African communities we work with have also expressed a desire to be able to come together to share their own traditional meals, as well as learn western style foods together.

For More Information Visit:

<http://www.marss.org.au/about-our-programs/>

