

CASE STUDY: WORKING BEYOND BOUNDARIES



Working Beyond Boundaries helps refugees gain employment and language skills while connecting with their local community

AT A GLANCE



Target Participants

Migrants from a refugee background



Aim

To overcome difficulties experienced by migrants in entering the workforce.



Organisations Involved

AMES; Brotherhood of St Laurence, Parks Victoria



Location

Werribee, Victoria



Funding

Partnership

A group of volunteers from the Karen community

(refugees from Myanmar) have helped to transform a dormant community garden into a thriving kitchen, full of vegetables and herbs.

“These volunteers were initially afraid of coming into the park, unsure that they would be welcome, and understandably wary of people in uniform,” said Dr Bill Jackson, Parks Victoria Chief Executive.

“The garden has become their outlet and a way for them to meet with other people from the community. The sound of laughter has become a musical soundtrack in the park.”

When the project started it focussed on women from refugee communities, and aimed to address some of the mental health issues associated with the effects of post traumatic disorders, including depression and isolation. Now the project also includes younger members of the community that have left school and been unable to gain employment, mainly due to lack of English rather than lack of skills.

The program has a strong social and educational component that makes it quite unique. It now includes a training organisation providing on-site classes in vocational English and horticulture as well as the Parks Victoria Traineeship program, mainly aimed at people under 25 who are given the opportunity to work alongside rangers and learn park management and horticulture based skills.

The project is a partnership between the Adult Multicultural Education Service, Parks Victoria and the Brotherhood of St Laurence. The Werribee Mansion Hotel onsite gets a share of the fresh produce for its restaurant as well as a great story to tell their guests.

“This project shows the power of an idea. Of reaching beyond the park boundary to bring people together and improve their health and wellbeing,” said Dr Jackson.

Dutchie says working at Werribee has given him purpose and a meaningful life.

‘I am very happy here. It is good to come here and do something. I love working with plants and working with the people here is good.’

Dutchie

*25 years old
Karen refugee*

For More Information Visit:

<http://www.hphpcentral.com/case-study/parks-victoria-working-beyond-the-boundaries>

