

TEACHING DIVERSITIES:

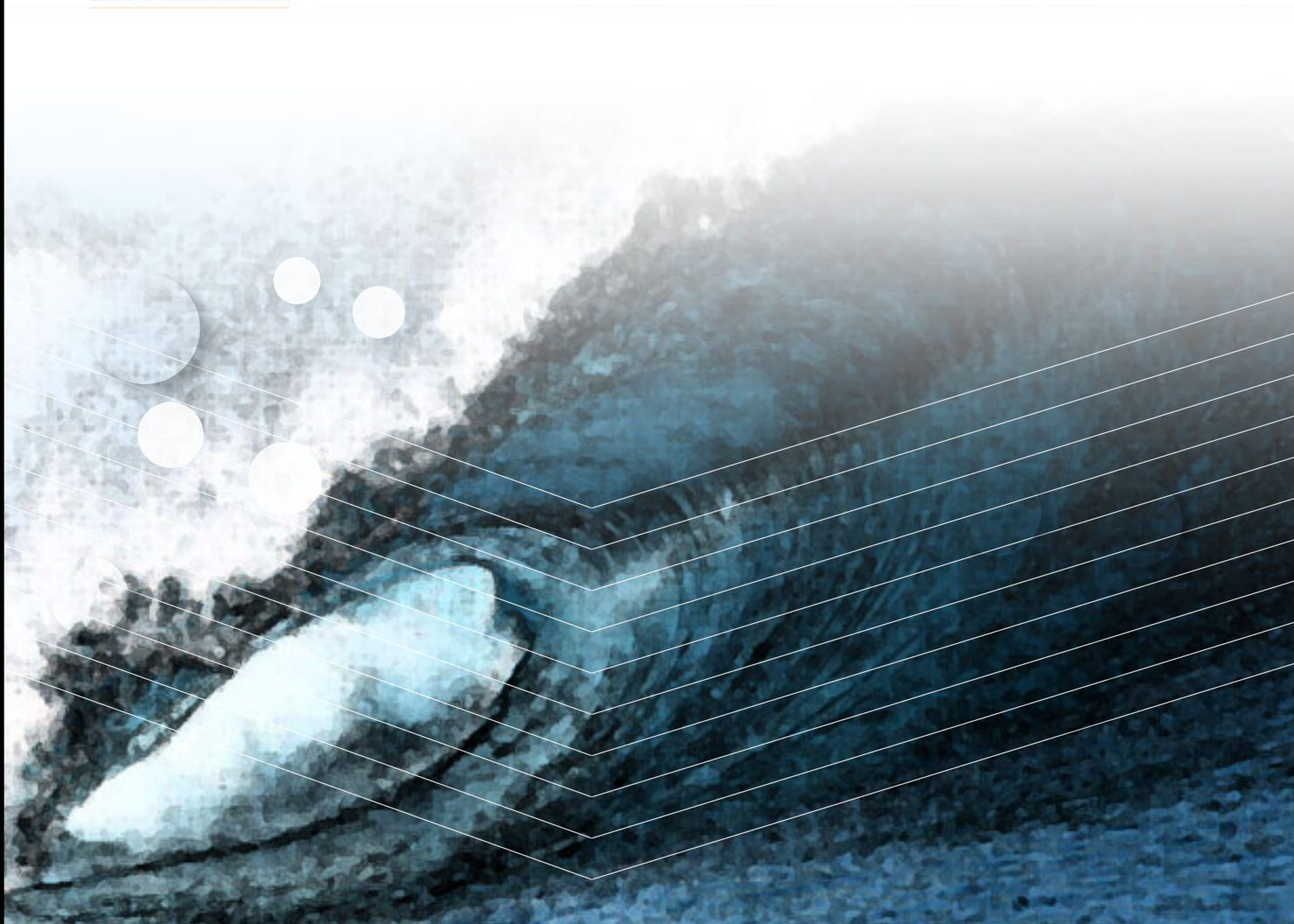
Same Sex-Attracted Young People,
CALD Communities, and Arts-based
Community Education

A COMMUNITY CONSULTATION REPORT

Dr. Anne Harris

with Bree McKilligan, Lian Low & Greig Friday

A joint project of Victoria University's School of
Education and the Centre for Multicultural Youth



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and Arts-based Community Education

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- » Dr Shanton Chang, Melbourne University
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CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	4
Aims	4
Rahim’s story (Muslim Gay Male)	8
2. CONSULTATION DESIGN	9
Terminology, ethical considerations, recruitment, demographics, process	
Janina’s story (Italian-Bosnian Lesbian)	15
3. LITERATURE REVIEW	17
Laura’s story (Papuan/Torres Strait Islander genderqueer)	20
4. EMERGENT THEMES	21
Rania’s (Ethiopian heterosexual female) &	
Hassan’s stories (Pakistani heterosexual male)	25
5. TEAM REFLECTIONS:	26
Do you hear what I hear?	
6. RECOMMENDATIONS	30
Lani’s story (Sri Lankan queer female)	32
7. ARTS PROJECT IDEAS	33
Rob’s story (Indian-Portuguese-Malaysian gay male)	36
8. BIBLIOGRAPHY	37
Selected filmography	44

All names have been changed and/or removed
to preserve anonymity of the participants

INTRODUCTION

Because we are more than our sexuality, we are more than our Italianness, we are more than our gender, do you know what I mean?

We are all human.

↩ Italian-Australian lesbian

THE TEACHING DIVERSITIES project has been funded by Victoria University and represents a collaboration with the Centre for Multicultural Youth in recognition of the particular needs (and risks) of doubly-marginalised young people who identify as both same sex-attracted, and those from multicultural backgrounds. The vulnerability of these young people hinges on the intersection of homophobia in some cultural communities and also racism within some lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) communities. Nevertheless, as this report shows, these young people show a high level of awareness of the complexities within this difficult terrain that they are navigating and negotiating. Earlier academic and autobiographical writings have addressed the ability of young people who are “assertively interweaving lifeworlds” (Pallotta-Chiarolli 2000, p. 31) and living to tell the tale (Langley, 1998). This project seeks to address this ‘double bind’ (Chang & Apostle 2008) through broad arts-based, community-driven education programs, which seek to both support the young people themselves, but also to work across sectors and generations, particularly within emerging migrant communities to provide community education using arts projects. This project seeks to address the causes, not just effects, of homophobia and racism.

This consultation’s primary aims are:

- 1) to assess the needs of same sex-attracted (including gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer) or questioning young people from non-Anglo and culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- 2) to gather community based directives for arts projects addressing same sex attraction within culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

This is a Phase 1 study which will inform a Phase 2 arts-based community education project. A gap in existing research shows that community organisations and youth services “recognise that same-sex attracted young people are often socially isolated, and ...that many young people experience negative reactions from the people around them regarding their sexual orientation” (FPV 2010). This consultation draws on previous research (Chang & Apostle 2008; Pallotta-Chiarolli 1995, 1999, 2005; Sears 2005) which identifies ways in which some SSA young people from CALD communities can experience additional isolation and silence navigating sexual, racial and cultural diversities, and the exclusionary practices sometimes found within all these communities.

This project recognises the complexity of multiple diversities as sometimes a 'double-bind', and seeks to foster social inclusion and provide support for SSA young people and their parents and communities through arts-based community programs. A recognition of multiple diversities which seeks to "foster social inclusion of SSA young people in local community groups and initiatives" and "provide interagency support for the parents, friends and families of SSA young people" (Leonard et al 2010) will inform the work of this project as we address intergenerational homophobia through an arts-based community education campaign, directed by the young people, as Phase 2 of this research.

This project also brings together human rights theory with arts-based methods, which fits increasingly interdisciplinary research in the area of youth and sexualities. A recent study suggested that 'nearly one-third [of same sex-attracted people surveyed] had been subjected to abuse because of their sexuality' (Hillier et al, in Symons 2006), and this Phase 1 research will provide crucial data leading to an arts-based SSA youth and community education project.

Background

I came out to [my father] when I was fifteen and he was like 'Yeah, I know'. I got up all this courage to tell him, but he didn't even put the paper down, like "yeah, duh, very gay".

↳ Sri Lankan queer female, 26

In 2010, the Teaching Diversities project came together as a collaboration between Bree McKilligan, Arts and Culture Coordinator for the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY), and Dr Anne Harris, Lecturer in Creative Arts Education at Victoria University (VU). For CMY the project was motivated by the recognition that few opportunities existed for young CALD people to address issues of same sex attraction. CMY service providers found however that young people from newly arrived communities were not raising issues of same sex attraction, even when it appeared to the CMY service provider to be a feature in an individual client's life, and concluded that a research project was warranted to uncover the needs of SSA CALD young people. The project was informed by similar experiences and endeavours addressing issues affecting culturally diverse young people who identify as same sex attracted. When we were successful in gaining funding from a VU early career researcher grant, this provided the time and research assistance to conduct a comprehensive community consultation to gain a range of input and ideas on arts strategies as a community education tool. Early into the community consultation, however, two notable complexities arose: 1) that the terminology used to identify these young people who were both exploring diverse sexualities

and culturally or racially diverse (ie non-white, and/or from non-western migrant backgrounds) was insufficient and at times alienating; and 2) that any exploration of homophobia within cultural communities had a corollary of racism within sexual communities, and which equally needed addressing. These two important issues are discussed in later sections of this report.

On 9 December 2010, we invited the participation of a group of 'critical friends' who generously gathered to discuss the project, and to offer advice and insights into its aims and possible future directions, based on their extensive and multi-sector experience. These practitioners, community members and researchers have collectively generated much of the community-based research on sexualities diversity and sexualities education in Australia today, and we are grateful to them for participating and sharing their expertise. Some of the main points that emerged from that conversation, and which influenced the direction of our work and this project are included below.

Associate Professor Anne Mitchell, who commented that within the *'Writing Themselves In #3'* Report produced by the ARCSHS program at La Trobe University, CALD respondents were present and somewhat higher than the normative sample, but the research team didn't analyse this 'group' separately because their responses did not appear significantly different from the normative sample. In light of the fact that this series of seminal reports was not qualitative, and did not address the specificities of cultural difference, Prof Mitchell believes this is a gap in the research literature, and was very positive that we are now addressing this area. Darren Grainger, Program Coordinator of the Healesville Living and Learning Centre, highlighted the need to recognise geographical diversities as

culture-generating or impacting, including rural/regional, and highlighted the relationship between space, place and identity, especially for those who identify as CALD- and Indigenous-Australians. He stressed the need to consider the flow-on effects from regional isolation, including low socio-economic (SES) factors, for many LGBTQ or SSA young people in non-urban areas.

Community Educator and Melbourne University Senior Lecturer Shanton Chang asserted a gap in research/community projects around definitions of 'identity', the self-identification of the respondents (again, reflected in the interview and focus group responses, recorded in Sections 2 and 4 of this report, and offering still further areas of community programming and research activity). From his extensive community education and youth advocacy work, Shanton highlighted issues including the ways in which identifiers such as first, second, third generation don't tell us everything about the young people we work with; according to Shanton, "It's about identity rather than descriptives. There's no real work with SSAYP about 'why do people identify as...'", which this consultation begins to address. He also stressed the ways in which identity informs the professional work that young people will do and the needs they have both now and going forward (ie support group needs, networks, communities, community events). He drew on both his current work and his involvement in the Living and Loving in Diversity Conference (2004), the recommendations of which he summarized in *Gay and Lesbian Issues and Psychology Review* (2008), and from which this study also gratefully draws.

This critical group continued to problematise and strategise ways in which we might support the young people to have space to move and shift those identities. We also recognised the ways in which

consultations and community projects (including research) can produce skewed results by tending to talk to people who are more outgoing, more confident, and more networked. We sought to create a project and a network of people who could reach those young people—same sex-attracted, culturally, religiously, linguistically, regionally diverse—who most need it, and recognise that they are exactly the ones who are hardest to find.

Dr Greg Curran (Program Manager, Adult Migrant Education Program, Victoria University) pointed out the ways in which general culture affects the ability of the young people to come out, because it might ‘get back’ to their communities. Greg has over many years run highly successful programs bringing the issue of sexual diversities into adult migrant education programs, as part of general cultural awareness work. The other thing Greg has seen change over the past 12–18 months is the ways in which in the classroom, his recent-arrival students never really have an issue, and they readily acknowledge the value of ‘community’, which they have taken into links between secular versus faith-based society, a topic which allows students to talk about what life was like in their former countries. He has found that students are tremendously interested in questions including: ‘How does secular society then impact on women’s and gay rights?’ and the ways in which these questions impact on questions of gender and gender-identity. Within this context, and across our focus groups, issues of faith and sexuality have consistently emerged, but conflated with culture. This is certainly an area for

further research, some of which has already begun with scholars including Dr Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli, Dr Fida Sanjakdar, and Dr Mary Lou Rasmussen, among others.

Throughout this consultation, first within our critical friends group, and later in almost every focus group and interview, the constant discomfort and inadequacy of terminology continued to emerge. Many group members from our critical friends have pointed out discomfort with culturally diverse, CALD, NESB, SSA, diverse, etc. No universally acceptable or more widely satisfying terminology emerged to replace it. This is certainly an area for further research, and points to the need for context-specific language and practices.

Other topics of note that emerged included the need at times for compartmentalization in the lives of SSAYP from CALD backgrounds. Roz Ward noted that the most frequent requests to the Rainbow Network are around issues of cultural and faith/religious diversity. This group of critical friends also suggested that we speak with teachers and service providers, not just community members (which we did in the one-on-one interviews). Lastly, the group advocated the use of online technologies, but stressed that there is no real need for quantitative data on this topic, and that indeed small numbers may render that impractical anyway. The study therefore remained a rich data, qualitative survey of the needs and perspectives of those who responded to a call for “same sex-attracted or questioning young people from culturally diverse backgrounds”.

Rahim's story

Egyptian gay male, 26; excerpt:

My experience with the Muslim community, obviously there's a huge faith issue there, so they are not going to go out on their own bat to confront homophobia. When I came out, I moved really far away from the Muslim community and then I decided I would go back in and change the world; and it was very interesting because I went back in there, and even though I didn't come out, I made it my goal to confront homophobia wherever I saw it.

The first thing I found was, that if you spoke out against homophobia, they would be like you're gay.. why are you sympathizing, you must be gay, you're this. Then I also found, if you confront people on it, most people would agree on what I was saying. And I did not find a community that was violently homophobic and go around gay bashing every week; it was actually full of people that were sympathetic with the gay community, but no one had actually bothered to go around and challenge them.

I guess for me its more about my faith background than my ethnicity [...] I go out in the gay bar and I meet somebody, not saying my name [...] because I'm thinking that they might think that I'm some crazy guy or some terrorist.

It's been difficult. When I went into the gay community, I made lots of gay friends and cut off my faith background, when I went back to my faith background, I cut off the gay community and I'm now trying to find some way back in the middle.

I think there's reasons why that happened, because there's a lot of people in the gay community that may not have an appreciation for the great world of religions. And I guess the Muslim community do not have an appreciation for wider sexuality, so I've kept them pretty separate. Sometimes I feel like I'm playing with fire, sometimes it can be a hard path to cross. I feel I've got to very much hide myself in both places which is not healthy. I've contemplated moving to a new city and starting afresh and saying, well this is who I am, you're going to have to deal with the whole package sort of thing.

[...] I decided to come out to a few of my cousins; that was a bit of a mistake. I came out to my cousins that were queer-open-minded-cool, and it was funny because even this cousin who was the fag hag to the gay boss, freaked out with me. She tried to put on this face "I'm cool, I'm cool", but I could see that her face was blushing and she was losing blood. It didn't look good. And then she said, "that's great, that's a great practice run, but don't try this with anybody else"... So I'm not out to anybody else.

I know my dad is pretty homophobic. He's constantly mouthing off stuff.

I think there's hope.

I think for [my Dad's] generation it's a bit of a lost cause at least from my community.

But I'm certainly hearing more positive things from my generation; I think there's definitely a changing trend there. I think the next generation would probably feel a bit more comfortable.

I think myself, I'd love to come out to my family and friends but I can't because they've got very entrenched views ... but if [my Dad]— by some amazing miracle his view would change—that would automatically create a safe space for me to live a more open life.

CONSULTATION DESIGN

Terminology, ethical considerations, recruitment, demographics

A way I could integrate my two different selves, is to find ways to counsel my parents to be accepting of gay people so that they won't be ashamed of it. Counsel my parents so that they are more accepting.

If I knew the techniques about how to make them more accepting, that would be really beneficial.

↩ **Indian/Portuguese gay male, 26**

a) Design of consultation & recruitment

This community consultation used qualitative data gathering focused initially on SSA culture-based youth groups in Melbourne and regional Victoria, and attempted to solicit views about both first and second generation migrant backgrounds (SSA young people and their parents). However, these established culture-based queer youth groups were not always productive sources of participants. This consultation phase has included a peer-to-peer recruitment strategy based on the understanding that participants are more comfortable discussing sexual and cultural diversities with other young people from these groups than they may be with adults (Measor, 2006).

Like Measor, the Teaching Diversities community consultation involved training young people who identify as culturally and/or sexually diverse as research assistants (RAs) to undertake peer-to-peer interviews and focus groups, and the project leaders strove for a gender balance in order to best facilitate the research. This training was provided by the Centre for Multicultural Youth, before the community consultation began, and the research assistants were supported by the project leaders during some interviews and focus groups.

The majority of youth respondents were interviewed via a focus group approach, a commonly used method in research with young people in the field of sexualities research (Frith, 2000; McMichael et al 2009; Allen, 2005a). The RAs' interaction and ability to identify with co-participants productively informs the data collection; the RAs' concerns and understandings, rather than that of the senior researchers/project managers are foregrounded and incorporated into the consultation.

Recruitment

Such constraints had implications for recruitment. Despite widespread calls for participation through established cultural, sexualities, community youth support and academic networks, responses were low. Focus groups maintained an average of five per group, under the usual 8–10 per group for usual community consultations run by either CMY or VU.

Additionally, the original age range had to be extended in order to include even these respondents; the youngest in our final figures was one 15-year old who's parent drove her to the focus group, and the oldest respondent was a 38 year old Chin Burmese heterosexual male who participated

as a member of a recent arrival focus group at an Adult Migrant Education Program. Additionally, the team made the decision to expand the consultation to include other stakeholders: service providers, group coordinators, youth workers, educators, researchers, parents. While this population (older and not always CALD) fell at times outside CMY's main target group, they were consulted based on extensive experience within cultural or sexual identity groups, and the focus remained firmly on the young people.

Our participant requests to groups such as the Australian GLBTQ Multicultural Council (AGMC), OutBlack, Greek and Gay, ArciLesbica Australia, Queer Muslims and Yellow Kitties (to name a few), were very supportively and in some cases enthusiastically received, but respondents were few. This may be attributable to few members under 30, as noted in Yellow Kitties, and the need for anonymity which made some groups more difficult to reach. The RAs and research team extended our call for participants further into the general community, assisted by list-serves like the Rainbow Network and youth work email lists. The RAs (themselves SSAYP) also recruited via snowball sampling from their own SSA and cultural affiliations and networks. The focus of all consultation activities was to find out more about attitudes toward same sex attraction in the respondents' own cultural, ethnic and religious communities, and how we might collaboratively best conduct a community-based education campaign using the arts. The focus group discussions also included brainstorm sessions on arts projects for Phase 2.

In addition to the focus groups, team members identified a range of other community members and service providers who could provide, in one on one interviews, additional information about what CALD SSAYP might experience. Other one-on-one interviewees came through referrals or enquiries from other young people, scholars, service providers, family members and youth workers. The RAs explained to individual interviewees that

we were gathering information about how to address sexualities diversity in non-western migrant communities in Australia, about experiences young people have already encountered in relation to the intersections of their cultural, religious and sexual identities, and lastly, that we are seeking advice and suggestions about which arts methods will best facilitate such a community education campaign.

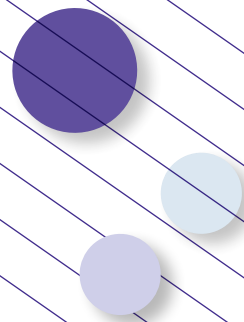
Our two research assistants (RAs) conducted all data gathering, in partnership with the two project directors. The means for collecting the data included:

Focus groups

which allow for participants to identify with others who share similar views, and provide a safe and relaxed environment in which to explore the research issues. These focus group discussions were also used to elicit themes that could be further explored in later one-on-one interviews. Focus groups also provided an opportunity for the Ras/facilitators to interact more informally with the young people in an extended interaction, to more deeply understand and advance the issues of most concern to them.

Semi-structured interviews

were used to gain deeper insight into the experiences of being CALD and SSAYP. These interviews drew from a range of positionalities, including service providers, CALD community members (both young and older), and teachers. These in-depth interviews allowed researchers to 'access peoples' ideas, thoughts and memories in their own words' (Reinharz, 1992:19), a crucial aspect of working with those from backgrounds other than English-speaking Anglo ones.



b) CALD and SSAYP terminology:
finding a name for ourselves

As Lian does the introductions at beginning of Focus Group #3, a participant who self-identifies as a 21-year old Papuan/Torres Straight Islander/Scottish genderqueer interrupts to ask:

PARTICIPANT: Did you invent CALD?

LIAN: No, it's a term that's used in academic, community development and social work settings.

PARTICIPANT: I think it just seems that white is not diverse.

LIAN: Yeah, true. We've talked about that as it's a problematic term.

One of the first emergent themes that informed and impeded some dialogue about the experiences of these young people was the terminology for identifying (but not limiting) same sex-attracted young people from non-western migrant backgrounds in Australia. The project team found ongoing challenges with terminology which reflected the complexity of the multiple identities of those with whom we were consulting, but we also found the 'terminology problem' arose within our culturally and sexually diverse research team. We found that both CALD and SSA carried global, geographical, generational and political connotations. In our team meetings, these complexities presented themselves as both a difficulty or inadequacy in addressing the specificity of the community members we were discussing, but also as symbols of the often unspoken (or unintended) political connotations of those with whom we worked, and of ourselves as identities-in-motion.

The acronym CALD was perhaps most problematic. Drawing as we have from Chang & Apostle's recommendations (2008) for policy and service provision with/to culturally diverse LGBTQ people, we adopted their use of the acronym CALD to represent non-Anglo people who are also from

culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds. While all care was taken to remain sensitive and specific in our language use, and to allow for self-definition at all times, we found tensions amongst the wide range of interpretations of what CALD meant to ourselves and others; for example, some understand CALD to mean any person from a non-white background; others understand it to mean ethnically diverse rather than just culturally diverse (eg white immigrants from English-speaking countries were not classifiable as CALD); others understand it to have socio-economic implications (eg lower socio-economic); while still others during this study understood it to mean those from other countries (eg non-Indigenous Australians, but non-Anglo), and those who are non-white Australian born. Some respondents preferred to identify themselves as people of colour and/or queer, rather than either CALD, LGBTQ or SSA. One of the strengths of this broad consultation was in the great diversity of respondents, including very newly arrived migrants, but this also added to difficulties with common understandings of terminology.

The complexities of the 'terminology question' were felt early on within the team, and layers of complexity also resulted from differing scopes

of project activity between CMY and VU. For its service provision CMY identifies CALD as refugee and migrant (including second generation)— young people who are from cultures significantly differentiated from mainstream Australia as to produce additional and/or specific needs.

VU includes in its definition of CALD those from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, culturally diverse as a self-definition (New Zealander and American, for example), and regional diversities (rural and remote) as well. To this end, we sometimes included interviews with individuals from both definitional categories. However, for the joint purposes of this report, we have included only those who met the criteria of both organisations.

Definitional and terminological complexities only expanded as we moved into consultation. Some respondents answered questions about cultural community by giving answers about race instead, while for others considerations of both played a role. Even though attempts were made to consult with more recently arrived respondents, the explicit nature of the consultation topic (ie talking about sexuality) might have inhibited the response rate. At times it felt like walking a fine line between maintaining the safety and privacy of participants, and offering a space in which such topics can be spoken. Therefore, in many ways the study itself inhabited the liminal in-between space that the respondents themselves inhabit, and the weaknesses and strengths of the data reflect these riches and also tensions.

Like the problematic CALD acronym, SSA or SSAYP was similarly clunky at times. While our recruitment and outreach extended beyond the young LGBTQ community, many expressed confusion or surprise at the terminology of ‘same sex-attracted’. In our recruitment campaigns (which included flyers, online surveys and electronic call-outs) many respondents failed to connect with the terminology and initially did not even realise this was directed at them! As the research team worked our way through the consultation, we changed the terminology at times to LGBTQ, but were never able to reach agreement on a preferable term. Anecdotal evidence amongst our team and participants suggested that queer had strong political, socio-economic and generational connotations and alienated a segment of the community; LGBTQ was felt to be too identity-based (in some cases framed as ‘western’) and might alienate those young people who were questioning and did not necessarily consider themselves identified with their sexual experimentation or questioning; questioning was felt to be too patronising or inconclusive for those who were firmly out; gay was felt by many to still refer almost exclusively to males; lesbian was rejected by many females as being too old-fashioned or politically undesirable. In the end, we decided to stick with same sex-attracted because it seemed to apply most broadly to those along the spectrum of non-straight, in spite of its insufficiencies.

c) Ethical considerations

The *Teaching Diversities* community consultation presented obvious logistical obstacles when dealing with community members who are necessarily often invisible/anonymous. In the planning stages of the consultation design, our Critical Friends/Advisory group directed us to the many queer cultural groups around Melbourne. While there were other community-based and personal networks, we believed this would solve multiple issues: it would give us already-established sources of participants, while also ensuring that those consulted were already self-identified in at least a semi-public manner with both their sexual and cultural identities.

Our first and foremost consideration was to maintain and respect the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants and respondents who agreed to be a part of this study. In some cases, those participants were out LGBTQ or SSA individuals and were not concerned about anonymity. The research team found that while some older respondents were more comfortable talking about their sexuality and culture, they still had motivations—albeit often different ones than their younger counterparts—for remaining at least partially private about their sexuality or same sex relationships. And within queer cultural groups, the same kinds of intergenerational considerations are present as can be found in the general population: many participants identified a need for more visible and accessible culture-based LGBTQ groups: participants had not heard of culturally diverse LGBTQ groups from less-established (more recently arrived) communities, were in some cases not able to easily reach the ones that do exist, and also expressed a perception that such groups are for older people. Nevertheless, groups like Yellow

Kitties, though small, continue to provide a crucial first port-of-call for many Asian lesbians arriving in Australia, even if only temporarily. Most of the older respondents were active in culturally-identified groups such as AGMC or Queer Muslims. Among these community members, many were activists, service providers, spokespeople, teachers, counselors, which informed their comfortability with commenting on the intersections between cultural and sexual identities.

There is considerable commentary in this study about online dating sites and social media groups as an important part of ‘coming out’, especially in the early stages (and particularly for those trying to maintain anonymity while doing so). Yet many within these categories were almost completely non-responsive to calls for participation in this study, perhaps reflecting the need to maintain that anonymity. Despite this, from the 25 focus group participants, and 9 interviewees who did participate, the ethnic diversity was broad, with over 23 ethnicities, 4 sexualities, 3 gender identities and 3 religions represented. Of these, 13 were born in Australia, and the most recent arrival was two weeks’ prior to participation.

d) Other issues of interest/ ethical obligation:

Soon into this community consultation, it became clear that the respondents were equally concerned with issues of racism within the LGBTQ communities, as well as homophobia within cultural communities. The need to address these dual-aim concerns of the respondents became an unexpected but important aspect of this study (see Section 4 entitled ‘**Themes/ Issues**’ for further detail).

d) Demographics

Focus Groups (5) Participant Summary

Ethnicity	Country of Birth	Year arrived in Australia	Age	Languages spoken*	Sexuality	Gender
Chinese	Australia	—	25	Cantonese	Queer	Female
Egyptian	Australia	—	26	Arabic	Gay	Male
Chinese	Australia	—	23	Japanese	Lesbian	Female
Vietnamese	Australia	—	21	Vietnamese	Gay	Male
Dutch-Indonesian	Indonesia	2010	19	Indonesian, Dutch	Gay	Male
Chinese	USA	2010	23	Cantonese, Mandarin	Queer	Female
Anglo-Indian	Australia	—	26	Hindi, Indonesian (not fluent)	Queer	Female
Chinese	China	1991	24	Shanghainese, Mandarin	Queer	Female
Chinese-Malay	Singapore	—	29	Malay	Gay	Male
Chinese	Hong Kong	2006	21	Cantonese	Gay	Male
Indian	Malaysia	2006	25	Malay	Gay	Male
Sri Lankan/Australian	Sri Lanka	—	26	Sinhalese	Queer	Female
Vietnamese	Australia	—	25	Vietnamese	Gay	Male
English/Unknown	Australia	—	21	Queer	Genderqueer	
Chinese	Malaysia	—	24	Cantonese, Mandarin, Malay	Gay	Male
Papuan/TSI/Scottish	Papua New Guinea	—	21	Tok pisin	Queer	F/Gendrqueer
Indian-Portuguese	Malaysia	2005	26	Malay, Tamil, French	Gay	Male
Greek	Australia	—	15	Greek, Latin	Lesbian-queer	Female
Macedonian	Australia	—	27	Macedonian	Gay	Male
Burma	—	2008	38	Burmese, Chin	Hetero	Male
Vietnam	—	2011	18	Vietnamese	Hetero	Female
Ukraine	—	2010	29	Ukrainian, Russian	Hetero	Female
Ethiopia	—	2011	23	Oromo, Swahili	Hetero	Female
Pakistan	—	2011	27	Urdu	Hetero	Male
Sri Lanka	—	2010	22	Tamil	Hetero	Female

* Other Than English

1:1 interview respondents summary:

Ethnicity	Place of Birth	Age	Role/ Relationship	Sexuality	Gender
Javanese/Scottish-Irish	Australia	19	Community member	Gay	Male
Anglo-Aussie	Australia	30s	Comm. Memb/svc provider	Gay	Male
Italian/Bosnian	Australia	27	HS teacher	Lesbian	Female
Chinese	Indonesia	28	Indonesian, Mandarin, Chau Chou	Lesbian	Female
Anglo-Australiaian	Australia	—	Svc provider / comm. Member	Gay	Male
Italian-Australian	Unknown	—	Ethnic- SS group	Lesbian	Female
Aboriginal	Australia	25	Community member	Gay	Male
Thai	Thailand	42	Comm. Memb/svc provider	Gay	Male
Chinese	China	32	Comm. Memb/svc provider	Gay	male

Janina's story

Italian-Bosnian-Australian lesbian female, 27; excerpt:

I'm from NSW and one of my best friends has a very similar cultural background to me, in that both our fathers are Italian and where my mum's Bosnian, his mum is Serbian. He is gay as well. Other than that I don't think I know anyone [from that background]. I guess my extended family had a tradition where any kind of shameful family issue or whatever was just shoved under the carpet and not to be spoken about. And my being gay was certainly part of that. I think young same-sex attracted CALD people are more likely to be in a difficult situation as they navigate their sexuality than Australian or secular families for instance. I had a Catholic upbringing and that certainly played a role. Feeling bad or guilty because I was gay was a common feeling when I was younger, despite having a happy childhood and excelling at school.

A lot of the issues that I had when I was growing up, I don't have any more or they have changed somewhat. But certainly young kids from diverse cultural backgrounds, I think could benefit from having positive role models from their cultural community. Especially if their parents were born overseas and have entrenched, traditional ways of thinking about queer issues. My father for instance was very concerned about the family's reputation and was keen to keep my sexuality a secret back in 2001 when I was 18. I think if parents or older same-sex attracted CALD people were able to relate to someone from their cultural background, this could perhaps help them to accept their child's/their own sexuality.

I'm a high school teacher and it's quite alarming when I look at the whole school body and there's generally one token "out" gay kid, knowing statistically it's one in ten. On the whole, I think that schools are unsafe places, and research certainly supports this. I don't think young people generally feel safe coming out, at least not to teachers anyway. I've always been quite outspoken about homophobia and I do my best to educate students about it - so most know I am queer-friendly (if not gay), and yet only a handful have confided in me over the years.

I deal with a whole bunch of different students from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds and experiences daily. I know that in every classroom I will have homophobic students, same sex-attracted students, those who are queer-friendly and those who haven't really thought about the issue. I know that same sex-attracted kids are more likely to use drugs and alcohol, are more likely to be homeless, and may face discrimination, and self-harm or even suicide.

I think education is certainly the way forward. My experiences stress the importance of getting more support services in regional areas —especially for young people who are limited in terms of transport, and who are not 'out' to an adult who could drive them to places. Programs like PFLAG do great work and more funding/advocating for these services would be great for CALD same sex-attracted young people.

English-based [arts] activities would be good because every student needs to do English as it's a compulsory subject, so doing an animation that links to a specific outcome in the syllabus may be a good idea... There are so many resources out there, as you can imagine, and as a teacher myself, I know that the less work we have to do the more likely that it will get used.

LITERATURE REVIEW

I think the problem is queers are so busy being oppressed that they don't look at other axes of oppressions like racism and stuff.

↪ **Queer female Anglo-Indian, 26**

KEVIN KUMASHIRO has written for more than a decade about the 'paradoxes inherent in the troubling intersections of race and sexuality' (2001, p. 2), including ways in which 'Ironically, our efforts to challenge one form of oppression often unintentionally contribute to other forms of oppression' (2001, p. 1). "'Doing diversity" is a complex and perhaps unavoidably messy process. But maintaining the goal of doing diversity is extremely important even if the achievement of this goal will be deferred over and over again' (Heath 2010, p. 118). This has certainly been the experience of the four investigators involved in this community consultation into the experiences culturally diverse and same sex-attracted young people. Yet it addresses a gap which has been identified since the AGMC conference of 2004, a gap between the rapidly growing body of research on young people and sexualities diversities both within and outside of schools (Hillier et al 2010; Rasmussen 2009; Sanjakdar 2009), and that of religious and cultural diversity in Australia. Consistently for nearly 20 years, Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli and her colleagues have contributed research and community-informed narratives to this field. The Teaching Diversities project seeks to contribute to the expansion of this examination into the intersectionality of cultural, religious and sexualities diversities.

Increasingly, research in sexualities is turning to the nexus between religion and homophobia. As religion maintains strongholds in many traditional cultural and ethnic practices and communities, this research must extend to an examination of

the intersection between culture, religion and sexuality. In these pages you will find great diversity in the ways families and cultures have responded to their same sex attracted-kin, yet one thing remains constant: where religion is concerned, homophobia thrives. Nguyen and others have noted that experiences of oppression are sometimes worse when "people who claim to be the men and women of God condemn and ostracise you" (2008, p. 46).

The links between homophobia and racism are legion. What is more surprising is how little research attempts to address them in a unified way. Those in minority communities continue to note the similarities, and call for holistic programs that address this interrelatedness: "homophobia is just another form of racism in my view since it manifests exactly the same way as racism" (Nguyen 2008, p 45). The stories excerpted here reflect lifetimes of racism, homophobia, marginalization and devaluing —often within the speaker's own family. Let us first and foremost honour the telling of these stories, the suffering and resilience they represent, and the overwhelming odds against the storytellers finding a way to encounter you the listener. This alone indicates progress.

As Rosenstreich & Riggs remind us, 'Diversity is more than a collection of categories of difference. It is a paradigm that acknowledges the multidimensional complexity of our identities and the interplay of social factors that determine so much of our lives' (2010, p. 114).

This community consultation has made ongoing reference to a cross-section of multidisciplinary

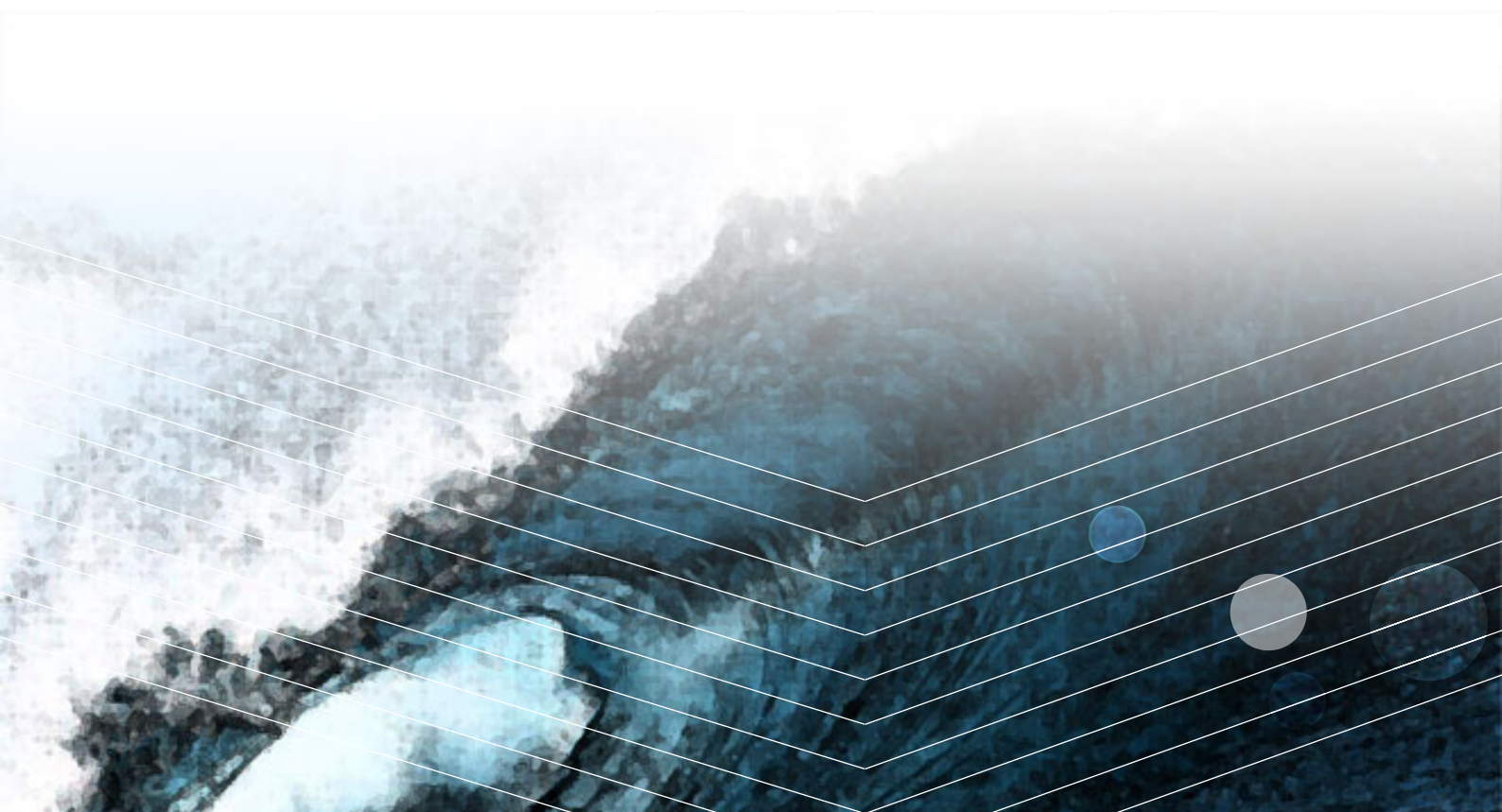
literature that has bearing upon this research, which fills a gap in the current literature on SSA-youth and diversities: the seminal *Writing Themselves In...* series (Hillier et al, 1998/2002/2006/2010) reported that more than 98 of their respondents were born in Australia or 'northern states' nations, and more than 73 were attending either university or some form of school (2002: 20-21); more than 55 of their respondents found the sexualities survey online. These statistics point to a lack of representation of SSA young people from non-dominant (Anglo-European, tertiary educated, migrant, low socio-economic) backgrounds.

As Murdolo notes, 'The findings of the 2005 Writing themselves in report is based on written surveys administered to young people, 21 of whom were from 'CALD' backgrounds. Accordingly, some of the issues that arose from the survey responses reflected their "multiple layers of identity"' (Hillier, 2005). However, the written English-language survey methodology does disengage subjects who do not have English literacy skills which is reflected by low numbers of respondents who were born overseas in non-English speaking countries (between 7 and 10) (2008, p. 43).

Pallotta-Chiarolli has noted concerns too about the use of focus groups and 'how this in itself might be

one factor in some CALD LGBTIQ not coming along or wanting to be part of the research; the idea of sitting in groups talking about 'private issues' or issues that communities may consider shameful or wrong is often a problem for people from cultures with strong privacy concerns and ideas about community status and what it's okay to talk about in public and what is shameful or wrong and not to be voiced' (private correspondence). The fact remains, despite a few notable exceptions, research remains slight in this area.

However, some enlightening work has been done and documented. This project and this report draw gratefully from the excellent recommendations offered by Chang and Apostle (2008) which arose from the 'Living and Loving in Diversity' conference 2004, an important milestone for culturally and sexually diverse communities, made available through the tireless efforts of the AGMC and special issue of GLIPR (Gay and Lesbian Issues and Psychology Review (GLIPR)). This event and its accompanying journal offered community-based recommendations now seven years on, many of which are still yet to be taken up. The Teaching Diversities project therefore has taken these recommendations as its starting point, and some important aspects are noted below.



Intersectional discrimination is not a new concept (Chang & Apostle, p. 56), and the need to address the (inextricably) interrelated issues of racism and homophobia is well-established, as is the 'need to challenge the association of particular cultures and religions with inherent homophobia'. Yet at the same time, there is a very real 'need to challenge fundamentalist/outspoken religions that promote homophobia' (p 56), and it can seem a contradictory task. Chang & Apostle also noted a 'recognition by conference participants that for many young people, there is a lack of role models, thereby increasing their sense of isolation. This is particularly true amongst young people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds' (p 58). Related, they call for 'diversity management competency' (p 58) of service providers, and for 'increased funding for groups educating CALD communities about issues of sexualities...[including educators] who are mirrors of those communities that they say they represent' (p 58). These are all recommendations consistently echoed by the Teaching Diversities participants.

This project seeks to address some of these imbalances. QAHC (Queensland Association for Healthy Communities) recognises the importance of 'Being able to make contact with other LGBT people from your home country and culture' and that projects, places and 'organisations that understand LGBT and CALD issues assist people to understand their sexual and gender identity in the context of their own cultural and familial backgrounds' (QAHC, 2010). This project importantly recognises that 'discrimination and affirming diversity are often held apart' (Crowhurst, 2009), and this project reunites these aims. While this literature review is a brief overview, and the bibliography at report's end is only partial, it seeks to consolidate some of the important research and community-based documentation that is growing and needs further dissemination. It is our hope that the Teaching Diversities report is one such clearinghouse for these important voices and resources, and that the arts-based programs which begin in 2012 might further the aims of Chang & Apostle's recommendations reported in 2008.

Laura's story

Papua-New Guinean, Torres Strait Islander,
Scottish queer female genderqueer, 21; excerpt:

I'm not out to most of my non-white family or my white family. I think if I was, some of those people would never ever talk to me again, and it's a reality I have to live with. My family has been so intensely Christianised that they just don't believe gay people exist and that you are satan or something if you are gay. I've been with my family and we'd be watching TV and there would be footage in the news of Mardi Gras or something and they would be like "What?". They seriously they don't know... this is a pretty poor, Christian Papua New Guinean family and they don't know what gay is. There is no gay movement in Papua New Guinea.

... A lot of gay people think that they are not racist because they are gay. A white person can never understand what it's like to be a brown person. It's like no, you can't read a book, you can't be told, you just have to live your life. For us, by us, 100%. I think there's this assumption that people of colour, communities that aren't white don't have a queer history, and that's so wrong. There's the Fa'afafines from the Islands which are basically trans men and there's heaps of queer culture in non-white culture —like in Indigenous, Asian and black culture. I think reclaiming that is a good start. It's not like gay people just happen now in the 21st century. Queer people have been around forever. Queer culture has existed in diverse communities, so I think that kind of education, when I started finding out about that stuff, I was like wow—that changed my life.

When I started getting involved with the queer community, I didn't think that they existed and I gradually over time [have become] aware of like Sistagirls. Maybe if there was a database or something where queer people of colour can...like videos, books, zines, there's some really rad queer people of colour zines from US cos they are not outnumbered by white people as they are here. The first really gay thing that I was exposed to in the media was Queer As Folk. I was like yes! Watching it every night and trying not to be busted. You know what I mean? I feel like it's accessible. I feel like we're living in such an internet and video age now, Facebook and all that social networking is where it's happening. I've worked as a teacher teaching little kids how to make hip hop music in Indigenous communities and stuff. And sometimes I would just come into a class and there would be someone who would be so obviously gay but they are a little baby gay. If only I could just nourish you. And I really feel for young queer people of colour in particularly in remote communities, who don't have access to stuff like we do.

EMERGENT THEMES

My family has been so intensely Christianised that they just don't believe gay people exist.

↳ PNG/TSI/Scottish genderqueer, 21

1. RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY and its impact on homophobic or tolerant views within cultural and familial communities. Christian and Muslim faithful were named, particularly 'back home', or amongst recently arrived. But participants revealed that the opposite can also be true: that when religious SSAYP come out, they often feel they have to hide their religious identities within LGBTQ communities.

My family are Christians and they gave me a bible for my 21st and told me to turn from my ways. I'm not even making that up.

↳ genderqueer, 21

2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND GEOGRAPHICAL FACTORS:

Those service providers and young people working or living in regional areas consistently highlighted the ways in which geographical diversities impact on their ability to be out, to be supported as SSA young people, and to be safe and healthy in their exploration. They also cited ways in which regional and rural isolation has effected their families' ability to access support services including organisations like Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG). Service providers also highlighted the ways in which regional isolation means that those seeking help often seek help for multiple issues at once, from the same service provider, which causes strain on the young person and service providers alike.

Being this far out yes, probably less likely because there is that isolation aspect of it, and just for a young person to get anywhere it takes a bus, irregular bus service to get into Lilydale. Then it takes a train and it takes half an hour or an hour on the train to get to anywhere that's even decent that they could find and then gotta come back again.... We are the ones that they come to at the first issue of problems... because we're the only service provider here that they know of. ... Most people, a lot of the young people we are dealing with, they come from very low socio economic backgrounds.

↳ Youth service provider, 30s, country Victoria.

3. IDENTITY AND ISOLATION: This theme emerged constantly in focus group discussions raised by the participants, including in relation to geography, religion, and culture. They stressed the double bind or 'double isolation' of being out OR in. Some participants highlighted the isolation experienced with the invisibility of SSAYP from CALD backgrounds. There emerged in focus group discussions the frustrations of prioritising aspects of identity in different contexts:

I think definitely a lot of the time, I do choose one over the other.

↳ Sri Lankan queer female, 26

Despite a recognition of the fluidity of identities, and their constant ‘interweaving’ (Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2000), responses suggested patterns of a ‘hierarchy of oppressions’ or identity-performance, in which the respondents constantly had to ‘choose’ between identities. Reflecting recent research internationally in this area (Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2010) participants noted negotiations around performance of self in which religious identity seemed to predominate over cultural identities, which most often predominated in turn over sexual ones. For some, a new sense of possibility is associated with the merging of cultural and sexual identities, something the young people found empowering. These new possibilities were recognised in established cultural LGBTQ groups and in the works of those like Benjamin Law (and his exploration of ‘Gaysian’ identities), and William Yang.

My dad cried, went to bed, tried to take me to a brothel the next day and told me, “Once you feel the touch of a woman, you’ll never go back”. And my mum tried to take me to the temple and I ended up doing the monk’s taxes.

↪ **Vietnamese gay male, 25**

Some, including one Chinese-American participant, stressed the slowness of changing intergenerational perceptions, but noted positives too, in relation to intercultural work around sexualities. For this respondent, she was happy to note that her grandmother just came out to their family as a result of this respondent’s own coming out, so it became a talking point. So, some respondents felt hopeful about the ability of arts and other campaigns to improve intergenerational understanding, but most did not.

Keeping cultural and sexual identities **separate** is the norm for most of the young people who responded to this consultation, and some say they ‘don’t see the need for it’; this highlights some contradictory responses, especially about the need to create change/projects/materials from within the communities, but then an inability or lack of support to address homophobia from within the communities.

This is what my mum said a few days after I came out, “Aussies or white people can be gay, but as a Vietnamese person there’s no such thing, you’re not allowed to.”

↪ **Vietnamese gay male, 25**

Isolation—within schools and within families—was repeated over and over, highlighting internal tensions experienced by many SSAYP from more conservative families/communities, who stress to them that by coming out they bring shame to their families. These conflicts added to frustration about being ‘invisible’ in wider LGBTQ communities (not represented), as well as sexually ‘invisible’ at home. Additionally, some participants acknowledged a disinterest in, or inability to, come out to their families or community members.

I think education can work at that level, where you have a responsibility to your kids to treat them with respect even when you’re under pressure, as parents are, or feel peer pressure from people their own age.

↪ **Sri Lankan queer female, 26.**

Lastly, some participants acknowledged the isolation and shame experienced by parents and family members who at times feel they must go into the closet with their SSA family member, or suffer from ‘peer pressure’ to conform, even at advanced ages.

As a Vietnamese woman, I’ve failed myself, I’ve failed my family, I’ve failed my husband, I’ve got a queer son.

↪ **Vietnamese-Australian gay male, 25, speaking of his mother.**

This isolation, invisibility and silence includes the array of sexual identities and practices present in SSA young CALD people, including bisexuality, polyamory, transgendered confusion (conflating transgender people or performance drag with LGBTQ identities), especially ‘back home’ and within newly arrived communities.

4. Such confusions and silences have impacted on the **TERMINOLOGY PROBLEMS** encountered in this community consultation. While SSAYP from CALD backgrounds, and the research team, have struggled with finding appropriate terminology to include all those who self-identity within this category, participants recognised that their parents and family members struggle even more, sometimes contributing to the silence, ignorance and inability to speak about the great diversity of sexual identities and practices which exist.

I think OutBlack is pretty good, and they have Sistergirl...[it's] a pretty accepted identity now: trans-woman, Indigenous trans-woman. And I know queer Indigenous people that are really supported.

↳ 21 year old Papua New Guinean/Torres Strait Islander/Scottish genderqueer participant

While some participants found terms like 'ethnic' and 'non-ethnic' offensive, others found CALD or the use of 'culturally diverse' equally offensive. Some suggested the term non-white, while others felt that they should be allowed to recognise and include the white side of their cultural inheritance/identities. While some felt that we were really talking about socio-economically disadvantaged, others felt that this implied conflation between CALD and low socio-economic status was offensive. Some suggested that what we really meant was 'racially diverse', while others felt that linguistic difference was the main identifier of community. Some still suggest that non-western is more accurate, while others believe that those refugees from western or 'global north' countries including Croatia, Russia and Serbia must also be included. Sexuality, too, became unmanageable: some found the term 'same sex-attracted' infantilising and frustrating, implying some sort of vague feelings but no action, whilst action is what they saw as defining them as 'non-straight'. Others opt for 'queer' as a politicised term, while others feel no identification with the term 'queer', while others felt it had inter-generational connotations, political ones, gender or class implications.

Even on radio where they get their news from Vietnamese radio or Vietnamese newsprint, there's no such thing as, 'Is your son or daughter gay?', or is there any queer support out there. It's almost like a taboo. And negating it always ends up in silence.

↳ Vietnamese gay male, 25

The clearest message from the study was that certainly self-identification is most important, but also that this complexity of terminology is both empowering but also splintering for those 'non-white, non-straight' young people trying to self-identify to parents, but also to a wider community who at times struggle to understand who and what is under discussion. One point most participants agreed on was that project leaders, teachers, and youth workers need more training in culturally diverse processes and structures when working with racially and culturally diverse young people.

5. RACISM: Some participants felt isolated, unsafe and uncomfortable when entering spaces dominated by white people, particularly in the queer scene. They reported feeling safer through 'power in numbers' when accompanied by other CALD SSAYP. Several male participants noted the pervasive racism apparent in online dating contexts, mostly left unaddressed. There was a desire, despite consistent experiences of racism within gay communities, to keep any arts campaign 'pro-colour' rather than 'anti-racism'; similarly, participants were keen to keep any campaign in cultural communities 'pro-gay' rather than 'anti-homophobia'. A few participants also noted another unwanted aspect of the racism apparent in queer communities, which they identified as 'racial fetishisation', and which also served to isolate and segregate queer communities.

There's a whole lot of queer youth groups and race is never mentioned. I think a really good thing to do is to educate the people who run those queer youth groups about race...

I spent my whole youth going to minus 18, I was a bit of a youth group slut really. I was often the only non-white person and they were run by really white people who had no concept of not being white and not, uhm, just no concept of people who aren't white maybe having a different experience, or maybe feeling a bit silenced in those groups.

↪ Sri Lankan queer female, 26

6. INTERNET: this is one place where most of the participants (both SSAYP and their teachers/service providers/older community members) felt that SSAYP from CALD backgrounds could (and are) coming out in relative safety. For this reason, the arts projects that were suggested often referred to a desirability of being web-broadcastable.

"I think for young people I guess, when you're realising that you're queer or whatever, TV, magazines, books, that's where you get all your information from. You're not going out talking to people."

↪ Sri Lankan queer female, 26

Not only online but other media play a big role in allowing SSAYP to explore, observe and experiment vicariously with the feelings that are emerging. Participants talked at length about movies, TV shows, books and online webisodes like *Queer as Fuck* that have reached them and given them a private opportunity to investigate taboo subjects. It also, at times, allowed them to find role models from their own cultures, races, or genders where there may not be any in their immediate day-to-day lives.

Female #2: Queer as Folk... What is this show?

Female #1: Yes, there's queers of colour!

Female #2: Yeah, stumbling upon. You're not really going out to meetings. It's things you do in secret, or by yourself when you're still figuring it all out, figuring if you're queer or not, that kind of thing.

#1: I think that's real. The first really gay thing that I was exposed to in the media was *Queer As Folk*. I was like yes! Watching it every night and trying not to be busted. You know what I mean?

#2: Good or bad---

#1: I feel like it's accessible. I feel like we're living in such an internet and video age now, and like Facebook and all that social networking shit, is where it's happening.

Yet as *Writing Themselves In* and other research has documented, SSAYP are also at increased risk of health problems, which some participants saw as related to internet activity. Having to hide on Facebook and other online spaces where religious/cultural/sexual identities merge in sometimes unwanted ways, can be unhealthy and stressful.

Facebook is always an interesting one, mutual friends and things like that reveal people. [...] I feel I've got to very much hide myself in both places which is not healthy.

↪ Muslim gay male, 26.

This community consultation provided a multitude of rich suggestions for ways to improve the lives and sense of belonging of SSAYP from CALD backgrounds. These six are only the most pervasive throughout the focus groups and interviews conducted over this four-month period. Clearly there is much more work to be done, both within cultural and sexual communities, and more mainstream society as well.

Rania's Story

Oromo Ethiopian heterosexual woman, 23; excerpt:

I lived in Kenya and there same sex attracted people used to be discriminated against by religious persons and also the government. Police used to harass them, some of them, their community banished [them] from their society. I think that's a form of discrimination.

I think the reason as to why it is addressed [here], it is given priority is because a lot of people, migrants came from different culture. Maybe, in their home country they don't have such things are spoken of. I think it's good to be given priority; I think, speaking often of it, people can get some education out of it. Even if they came closer to a same sex-attracted person, maybe he won't be afraid, in his town, he can know how to deal with it. Most of the acts in cinemas, I think most of them are shown to discriminate. I don't think shown to support, [they] are shown just to discriminate, make you feel that gay or lesbian people are really bad. [But] I think cartoons could be used, and then you include the teenagers and the young people, and then like you say 'I'm from this community' and it's—it's good. It will help them feel proud that there are people who care about them, people who accept them.

Hassan's Story

Pakistani heterosexual man, 27; excerpt:

I know lots of gays, in Pakistan, but they are not allowed to live together.

If somebody want to live with same sex partner, maybe they will be killed by extremists, by the Taliban, or some Islamic religious person. If they live secret, hide themselves, don't tell anyone, not even their parents, nobody can know, parents won't accept them. If they want to go out somewhere else to live with another person, nobody can allow that. Maybe they can [be] killed by their neighbours. If they go to police, police can also arrest them. Or maybe the police officer can kill them. It's happening in my country. Lesbians, nobody can think about. Girls always afraid of that, because in my country men is king, and they think that girls, women are like shoes, just wear it and throw it away. Nobody care about.

We have to teach [migrants] how to pretend when they are in a public place to accept the [gay and lesbian] people. Sometimes when we are in the train, when we see a gay couple we look at them to see what they are doing, they shout at us. "Hey, why are you looking at us?" That's not good. We have to teach them, both ways.

TEAM REFLECTIONS

Do you hear what I hear?

My relatives in China don't know anything, but I see them every three years, so I don't expect them to be close. My mum knows I'm queer and poly but because I have an opposite sex partner we don't talk about it that much.

↩ Chinese queer female, 24

SOME COMMON THEMES emerged also in the consultation team of Lian, Greig, Bree and Anne. While any community consultation is only a story fragment, this particular study represented some seemingly incommensurable tensions: invisibility/hypervisibility, autonomy/belonging, insider/outsider, self/other. At times it has felt impossible to speak at all; at other times painful to listen. While the four of us inhabit diverse positionalities in relation to the issues of cultural diversity and same sex-attraction, the following is a snapshot of some ideological intersections and some partings of the perceptual ways.

1. Our own roles We all, in some ways, reflected upon or were confronted by our own roles, identities and opinions in this consultation and its implications for community. As two white women over 30 in the roles of project leaders, Bree and Anne were aware of the need for gender and cultural diversity on our consultation team. And as queer young people, Lian and Greig shared certain viewpoints, and yet not others. Was this attributable to Lian's identity as a woman of colour, or Greig's as a white male? The project made clear that we are all irreducible to single identities, be they sexuality-based, age-based, culture-based, or other. The project partners sought to engage CALD SSAYP in the roles of research assistants, but found it challenging and eventually engaged Greig despite his not being CALD. Greig problematised his own whiteness in regard to his role in this project:

"In addition to myself not having a CALD background I was concerned about taking an opportunity of somebody else who could benefit from and contribute to the role as a person with CALD background. However...I recognise the assumption that somehow a CALD person would transcend all poor cultural assumptions [is problematic]... I do recognise that having a CALD background does not automatically provide profound understanding of the issues faced by all people of CALD backgrounds. However I still believe an affinity would be easier to achieve on some issues, namely around racism."

2. Lack of participation, but a lot to say!

The presence of large numbers of SSA culturally diverse individuals and groups does not a priori guarantee widespread participation in a project of this kind. As Lian notes, "Recruiting participants for the focus groups became a huge challenge." Despite the establishment of a Facebook group and page, and networking through established organisations like AGMC, Rainbow Network and Safe Schools Coalition, Midsumma and the ALSO Foundation, recruitment was difficult. The small but mostly-known (to the RAs) sample of young people who did finally participate might indicate in part what Lian notes, that "trust and confidentiality were important factors." Yet the ever-expanding parameters of the consultation were symptomatic of the small number of respondents. The top age of focus rose from 25 to 30.

Greig too noted that we might have been more pro-active on this point, based on our previous experiences:

On starting the project I felt a sense of simply just getting the job done quite systematically. Just a mere matter of contacting the multitude of Melbourne based CALD SSA peer organisations and add a few personal contacts and there it would be too many focus groups [to] handle. I couldn't have been more wrong and I should have already known this with my experience with the queer collective at Monash University where by simply having members did not mean they were predisposed to participating...

Both RAs and project leaders have noted how much these young people have to say, and how passionately (focus groups sometimes lasted over two hours). As Greig noted, despite logistical difficulties in gathering the participants, "...once the focus groups were convened it was always exciting to get to listen to and record the conversations and ideas."

3. Hyper-visibility: A frequently recurring theme was this tension or double-bind of hyper-visibility/invisibility. Greig comments:

Although I was very aware of racial objectification particularly highlighted in some gay men's venues (e.g. gay Asian nights), I had previously neglected to consider the 'hyper-visibility' of people of colour. And although invisibility is a real issue as reported by the participants with respect to media and representation, the nuanced complications associated with being more noticed and eroticised on a personal level is fascinating and problematic as well as difficult to grapple [with]... Not to mention the politics at play of privilege and power positions. I don't have much to comment on this whole aspect but I was drawn to its consideration.

4. Self-identifying, Identity, and Diversity:

Considerations of labels, language and identity have productively and problematically informed this community consultation from the beginning, as noted earlier, remaining as Lian notes, "complex and at times confusing."

The RAs have identified moments when organisational and political definitions have confused or alienated individuals or the project agenda. One such example occurred in a focus group, in which a participant identified as Anglo-New Zealander and as culturally diverse. Greig accepted this self-identification and allowed this participant to continue in the group. Anne also accepted this self-definition as a person from a culturally diverse background. This acceptance for Anne is informed by her own status as an immigrant American-Australian who considers herself significantly culturally diverse from Australians, yet is often considered culturally the same. Yet CMY's mandate does not encompass such definitions of culturally diverse, and this participant's feedback was not included in this report (but remains included in Anne's VU data). Confusion about such definitions threatens to alienate on all sides. As Greig notes:

In terms of asking a participant to articulate their background I felt uncomfortable doing this generally. I have felt that it's for the individuals to identify with being from CALD backgrounds or not. No less is it inappropriate for me to be making judgement calls about whether or not one is from a CALD background.

Yet by accepting this self-definition, Greig felt this focus group became inappropriately distracted with what might be termed 'dominant western concerns', a marked difference from the other four focus groups.

As he later noted:

I continue to question some of the positions expressed that revealed a lack of comprehension or awareness of the common issues that had been identified in other focus groups... I think that it becomes evident that the discussion within this particular focus group did in fact focus on themes commonly advocated by the dominant queer community's position, such as respect for general diversity and freedom to be the individual one is. I felt it smacked of western values and neglected the subtleties of various issues discussed in other focus groups.

Additionally, being 'out' was at times considered a white western notion. Some participants felt the need to identify with one's sexual preferences was characteristic of white western culture, and did not share this sense of identification. This, it seemed, impacted on recruitment, and so in the middle stages of this consultation, the team decided to open up participation to those who didn't necessarily 'identify' as 'same sex-attracted' (or GLBTIQ), but to those who were supportive of SSA people. This was, in part, due to low numbers of respondents, but also to broaden the perspectives represented in the consultation. Yet one negative outcome in an already unstable definitional field was that this expansion possibly further confused our team definitions of SSA. Lian in particular noted that this did not result in a significant increase in our number of participants, but that a longer consultation period, in which the RAs could have been "able to have time to build relationships with various communities" might have.

5. *Language, always language*: In addition to ongoing explorations around language, ethics and identity within our research team, examples from our personal lives influenced this study as well. Greig reflected on encounters he has experienced in which he was challenged on the term "non-ethnic".

"Is he ethnic?", he asked me. I asked what did he mean, to which he said, "as opposed to non-ethnic." I quizzed him on this and he said, "like you: white." I was astonished to think that I was perceived to have somehow transcended ethnicity.

Greig, RA

Lian notes how inadequate or inexact language, both within the consultation team and out in the community work, created confusion and sometimes frustration:

I understood CALD to mean ethnic minorities and/or non-English speaking background communities; those who are marginalised along ethno-cultural lines and marginalised from cultural and linguistic spaces, those that have been marginalised from Anglo-centric discourses, if we accept that the dominant cultural group in Australia are settlers and migrants from Anglo-Celtic backgrounds. Not all participants were comfortable with identifying as CALD, even though they could be defined under the CALD umbrella. Some participants problematised the use of CALD as a definition. CALD as a definition emphasised 'diversity' rather than marginality and ended up being a vague signifier for cultural and linguistic communities. For me, umbrella terms like CALD were problematic and limiting, a category created for bureaucratic ideological purposes and not a useful marker of identity.

Her complex unpacking of this terminology question begins to address the ways in which language impacts —sometimes inadvertently, even when addressed —research results and community engagements. Yet even on the most simplistic level, acronyms like SSA and CALD can be problematic. In this consultation, such acronyms were not only sometimes politically problematic for participants,

but simply unfamiliar. Lian takes the New Zealand culturally diverse example as evidence of “how problematic CALD is as a signifier”, but Anne notes that based on the responses, the only clear thing to emerge is that there is no one definition that suits all contexts and respondents. Therefore, this report concludes that CALD and SSA are not a priori to be discarded, but rather their meanings must be further defined and agreed upon within research teams, and explained more thoroughly to participants during recruitment.

6. Homophobia as a western notion: Greig has noted that some respondents, including one Chinese male, have asserted the notion of homophobia as a western import. This participant noted the liberal cultural codes of China in the 17th or 18th centuries. A Thai respondent also noted the adoption of the epithet ‘faggot’ from the western world. Other culturally diverse perspectives arose which identified similar patterns. Greig notes:

An Indigenous person said that in conversations with his Elder homophobia was a white fella thing not a traditional black fella thing. Lastly a person of Papua/Torres Strait background found that the homophobia in her family was a Christian based religious thing and not from the traditional cultures.

While there is increasing research to support both views about the historicity of homophobia, participants and researchers/consulters noted the need for education and collaboration to be mutual, and to increase understanding on both (all) sides of the cultural coin. Assumptions about who and what needs correcting can be, in the end, the best place to start. As noted so succinctly by Greig:

...As mentioned in a focus group it was easy for white people to assume that it must be a struggle to be gay and a person of colour, assuming that their cultural background would create a hostile context for that. So for me the take home message was before I can go out and educate about tolerance

and understanding it is important for me to first learn about traditional culture and understand what actually needs rectifying. I felt privileged to hear of peoples’ experiences so different to mine. Lastly as Lian would point out, the generosity of the participants were almost endless, talking about very personal reflections of what they thought the world was to them. It was great!

Lastly, it seems important to note that there is no definitive way of addressing these difficult issues, or performing these contested roles perfectly and yet our efforts have been rewarding. While the four of us on the consultation team at times disagreed, we productively continued to walk and work together to tackle these issues. Lian finished with a wish list for projects of this kind, and hopes that any intercultural queer arts project should demand that:

- a) participants are consulted from pre-production to the final outcome.
- b) that the animators working on the project are educated, aware, invested and responsible about issues to do with racism, cultural diversity and homophobia. Preferably, they are queer people of colour themselves.

While the *Teaching Diversities* project is committed to employing those who identify as non-straight CALD young people, this project itself is the best evidence that this can be extremely difficult to do. Additionally, while we all agreed that ‘consensus’ is not a word or notion that we desire or even perhaps believe in, it continues to assert itself in untenable ways. For example, if participants are consulted, how difficult might it be to ensure common ground and a mutually satisfying outcome? And how does a service provider or researcher ensure that artists or other facilitators are ‘educated, aware, invested and responsible?’ These are challenging suggestions, but important ones. A project like *Teaching Diversities* hopes that the lived experiences documented in these pages will go some way toward making these suggestions more possible.

PARTICIPANTS' RECOMMENDATIONS

Not everyone is comfortable talking or understanding things on an intellectually speaking level and sometimes I think art has a capacity to breach those barriers and create different ways of thinking and talking.

🔗 Chinese queer female, 21

1. Culturally diverse young people need role models from our own cultures, but also cultural advocates who are not LGBTQ

All participants agreed that this would be helpful, both for themselves and for their families struggling at times to understand and accept their LGBTQ or questioning children. Those like Waleed Aly and (Nazeem Hussain and Aamer Rahman of) Fear of a Brown Planet might be influential with older generations. Some participants suggested the need to simply assist in publicizing the “queer persons of colour” (respondent) who are already out there, visible and effective as role models, but who often don't get the same exposure as their white western counterparts. Participants mentioned several by name, including queer hip hop group Sargeant Snap, Foxxjazell (www.foxxjazell.com/FJ/About.html) a trans black woman rapper, and many more.

2. Peer support groups:

Most agreed that there is a need for more culture-based queer peer support groups, which might combat some of the isolation —yet not all agreed. Some said they wouldn't attend, and it isn't necessary. “It doesn't serve all purposes but I think it does perform some.”

3. SSAYP (information handouts) in own languages:

Most agree that it would be helpful to have information about sexualities diversities distributed in local languages, but not just translated. The call is for materials to be devised within own communities, a point repeated by many respondents; too often, western-culture materials that are simply translated still fail to hit the mark. Yet there was some

contradictory feedback about the need and value of maintaining invisibility, silence, and anonymity within cultural groups. For example, many of the queer respondents choose to keep these identities separate, which makes it difficult to do work from within the communities.

4. Address the racism in the LGBTQ community:

Recommendations call for a response to online racism on LGBTQ (especially dating) websites. Some respondents felt it was necessary to address the issue more systematically, including LGBTQ's who believe they 'cannot' be racist because they themselves are marginalised. Others felt the circumstances were mirroring larger societal conditions, and therefore remain hard to eradicate; these respondents instead recommend setting up (online) safe spaces where CALD SSAYP can safely meet. ACON (NSW-based GLBT health and HIV/AIDS organisation) has run an effective poster campaign that addressed racism in a multicultural context.

PARTICIPANT #1: I guess at that age too, under 16 or whatever, you have such limited ideas of what being queer is...

PARTICIPANT #2: It's just so daunting...

#1: Yeah, and what you're kind of presented with is this super white ideal of studded belt, side-fringe lesbians and twinkly little camp white faggots.

#2: And gay means going out partying.

#1: Exactly. And if your culture and your appearance isn't conducive with that, then it's like what kind of role models have you got? So I guess one way could be providing queerbos of colour, like role models to parade around...

5. Intergenerational issues: Participants recommended working with the younger rather than older generation, about whom most expressed a lack of faith in their ability to change (although one female noted the rich opportunity here for intergenerational dialogue). Additionally, most younger respondents did not express great interest in participating with AGMC, possibly the most visible umbrella organisation for CALD GLBTQ people and their friends, which the respondents perceived as for older people.

I thought of joining—there’s a multicultural organization out there, but it seems very sort of... older people... I think if there are spaces created where multicultural people can express themselves comfortably, that could help.

↪ **Muslim gay male, 26**

It’s not visible enough, I think. Firstly. Secondly, it’s difficult to find. What do you talk about anyway? Your culture?

↪ **Indian/Portuguese/Malaysian male, 26**

Yet several of the arts project suggestions reflect an interest in issues surrounding intergenerational dialogue and culture-building, for example:

Production: commission/workshop young and old queer and CALD artist to create artworks based on a global message about celebrating diversity. Creating engagement and ethnically diverse intergenerational dialogue. Eg older Greek male artist working with young Asian artist. Creating mentorships with common goal in mind. Artwork used to launch product like Fusion Arts exhibition.

6. Educate about traditional sexualities diversity: Scholars including Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli are already engaged in research in this area, and continue to expand the body of knowledge on this topic, and within educational contexts. We are not aware of any community projects on this topic.

I think there’s this assumption that people of colour, communities that aren’t white, don’t have a queer history, and that’s so wrong. There’s the Fa’afafines from the Islands which are basically trans men and there’s heaps of queer culture in non-white culture —like in Indigenous, Asian and black cultures.

I think reclaiming that is a good start. It’s not like gay people just happen now in the 21st century... Queer culture has existed in diverse communities, when I started finding out about that stuff, I was like wow —that changed my life.

↪ **21 year old PNG/TSI/Scottish genderqueer participant**

7. Arts are more effective for educating about SSAYP lives because:

“Artistic things can have a stronger appeal and a deeper resonance, rather than just say what you think people should think.”

“Greater incentive for people to engage with what is being said, cos they are enjoying the art and getting into it...”

“Art can be less didactic than telling someone or writing an article.”



Lani's story

Sri Lankan queer female, 26; excerpt

I found it interesting with my Sri Lankan family and my Sri Lankan community that they can invite my partner to family functions, they're ok with that as long as they never call them my partner. It's the friend! And they are fine with me being gay as long as I never talk about it and never try and use it as an identity so like I'm not gay, it's just I have this friend who goes everywhere with me and live with.

I think for a long time, I definitely chose my queerness over my non-whiteness. My parents are always fine with me being queer. My dad does, my mother is a bit iffy. But I think it's only quite recently that I've tried to combine the two and introduce my queer life to my cultural community. And it actually wasn't as bad as I thought it was. As long as you didn't push too much. I started off talking about not having a boyfriend, and then I started talking about having a partner, then a girlfriend, that kind of thing and you kind of introduce it slowly. I think definitely a lot of the time, I do choose one over the other. I wouldn't say I would choose to negate one, but I definitely squash one down a bit more. And in the queer community I think, I don't know if I squash down my cultural... I think I do. But I don't notice if I do it. I'm so used to doing it that I don't notice that I'm doing it. It's just normalised in my life to be gay before brown kind of thing. I think it's expected that that's what you do if you're not white. You're definitely gay, that's your bigger issue.

I think with my cultural community even if they know that I'm gay, I feel like I'm still not being really truthful. I don't think I'm gay in the way they think I'm gay. I'm not into monogamy. I haven't even discussed that with them. I'm really queer. I'm not into fighting for gay marriage... Yeah, so even if my family know that I like girls, I don't think they know me that much better, there's a whole lot of me that they don't know.

I have a dad that's completely cool about me being gay. I came out to him when I was fifteen and he was like 'Yeah, I know'. I got up all this courage to tell him, but he didn't even put the paper down, like "yeah, duh, very gay'. My parents are separated. I told my dad when I was 15 and I told my mum when I was 16, 17. She was quite surprised and upset by it. So I don't think it's a generational thing, it's just I guess my dad was a bit more left than my mum. My mum's OK with it now, but she was quite shocked and upset and doesn't think it's normal.

I went to Sri Lanka a few years ago and discovered that my cousin who lives there is a big lesbian and is quite out about it. She has told them she likes girls, not to their face, but she talks about it all the time, and is really quite flamboyant. My family think that she's just joking or she's playing around, they just don't believe her. But she talks about it all the time. She's quite in your face about it. But I was talking to her and she was still planning to get married. "Yeah, I'll just get married to some gay dude." This marriage of convenience, for looks, you know.

The not-talking about things is really quite strong in certain cultures. When I was in Sri Lanka, my extended family who lived in Sri Lanka, took me out to see this garden designed by this particular architect. And this garden was full of homoerotic art and this guy was very obviously gay, but that was never mentioned anywhere. My aunts were totally loving his gardening and his architecture and stuff, but there was nothing about him being gay even though there were like penises everywhere. You don't talk about it, it doesn't exist, there's no space.

I've had this situation where my mum is completely... she's OK on face value, she's OK on me being gay. My partner comes over to dinner at her place and stuff, but if aunts and uncles make inappropriate comments about my queerness, she would never defend me. I've had aunts and uncles try to set me up with guys, and random stupid things like that, and my mum knows I'm gay and it annoys me because I've talked to her about it, but she will never try and put a stop to it. I think education can work at that level, where you have a responsibility to your kids to treat them with respect even when you're under pressure, as parents are, feel peer pressure from people their own age.

ARTS PROJECT IDEAS

PARTICIPANTS WERE CANVASSED on their opinions for arts project ideas but participants were not selected specifically for their experience and/or interest in the arts. Overall, participants were more forthcoming when given some sample arts ideas to begin. While the range of suggested arts projects (below) is wonderfully wide, there were also many repetitions, and replications of well-known creative projects already existing, such as the *It Gets Better* video campaign. The research assistants felt that a more dialogic process with participants, in which they are involved with further funding applications to pursue some of these ideas, would be preferable, yet from an organizational standpoint this is difficult: project success depends on so many factors, including available participants/artists, funders, funding cycles, logistics, and past experience from

an organisational standpoint (eg: exhibitions and drama performances are often poorly attended, making these kinds of project suggestions less immediately attractive when short-term funding is most available). Yet these suggestions have been taken on board, and inform the selection process in an ongoing fashion.

Any funded arts projects that result from this community consultation will engage CALD and/or SSA community members, but not necessarily the same as those who were respondents in this consultation. The suggestions are listed here in their entirety, for those readers who might be in a position to bring to fruition those that CMY and/or VU are not able.

Animations/Video:

TD animation, especially using Facebook. English language animation is fine as young people learn really quickly, but if targeting older people make sure that there are translations as well.

Video projects like *"It Gets Better"* campaign

Short clip/film to post on YouTube similar to the 'I'm a PC, I'm a MAC' idea. We could say "I'm a queer, I'm a straight". A montage of different people saying similar things.

YouTube campaign/slideshow/animation. *Salaam Café* (variety show) type program. Write storyline... Don't have to identify as gay acting characters

Instead of YouTube, alternative option for people not to show faces is an open arts exhibition/installation. Person wants to do video, photo painting and it can go on display somewhere around theme of sexual identity, multicultural SSAY silent voice in this discussion... own speed short videos ton of screens.

Chinese, Indian or other group Soap Opera—on TV or YouTube.

One effective example: from the Northern Island LGBT group against homophobia: *Belong To* campaign - www.belongto.org/campaign.aspx

Social Media:

Facebook pages that provide support network, advertising of events, eg arts and cultural events. Create twitter, tumblr, fluid and moving where people can post.

Facebook pages: create inclusive groups; simple message.

Private groups: for people who are in the closet but want to connect with people in their cultural community. Public groups: to get exposure/educate wider community

Visual Arts/exhibitions:

Arts Installation - give ppl voice to express emotion. People could come in and see that they're not only one being that way.

Visual Art competition with GLBTIQ culturally diverse focus, media event. Queer artists must make a multicultural inspired artwork

Art exhibition —where artwork eg depicts loving lesbian couple that have two different ethnicities, beautiful family portrait, but two women. Possible for happy/positive images of queer/multi racial couple > like 'love makes a family' campaign.

Artwork then reproduced as postcards/bookmarks via AvantCards. Front side visual art images and reverse side is either useful information (with translations) links/lists of organisations that support diversity and queer; or creative writing info/text, poetry;

Paste ups, graffiti, Midsumma, postcards, posters

Visual: Photos/flyers/posters showing culturally diverse/religious queer couples/families in different settings

Theatre/Dance/Performance:

Theatre of the oppressed piece, involving the audience with the focus on homophobia (what it's like to experience homophobia). Audience participation. Allow the audience to come up with the solution to the problem on the spot.. Flexible.. Come up with solution cultural identity/solution is. (Forum Theatre)

Dance performance in the specific traditional cultural context. To rein-vision/reinterpret the concept/ cultural dance within their own cultural context.

To bring non whites closer to non white queer culture. Intersecting. Names: Black Witchery; Gay Lords of the Dance

Classical Indian Dance- folk story or Hindu Myth about a queer couple (using an existing folk story or make up a contemporary story)

Folk dance/drama OR Bollywood dance/drag/drama

Cabaret show eg Ladies of Colour Agency

Effective examples: Sista She (now defunct), Fear of a Brown P, LOCA...reference Glee!

OTHER:

Pen pal community - writing/building relations, peer group support, anyone in queer community can participate. The idea can also work with a particular age group. The schools would identify or support the queer students in the process

Radio play - for eg queer romance in family friendly setting. Family/community main ensemble, have one of the characters queer in a relationship is more appealing than focus on two queer characters. If just queer romance focussed on two queer people, not as wide appeal to people who are not supportive, no one to identify with. Bollywood film also have family forces and community as backdrop, not natural if only couple. Story of diverse sexual identities to homophobic audience

Cultural print media newspaper/mags/TV/radio

All in the relevant community language

Writing project with peer support: serious msg but simple —being gay is OK, discrimination is not OK. Human rights focussed

Infomercial: similar to gov msg about domestic violence —to be screened during AFL broadcasts

International GLBTIQ Day event with cultural diversity focus

Production —commission/workshop young and old queer and CALD artist to create artworks based on a global msg about celebrating diversity. Creating engagement and intergenerational ethnically diverse dialogue. Eg older Greek male artist working with young Asian artist. Creating mentorships with common goal in mind. Artwork used to launch product like Fusion Arts exhibition.

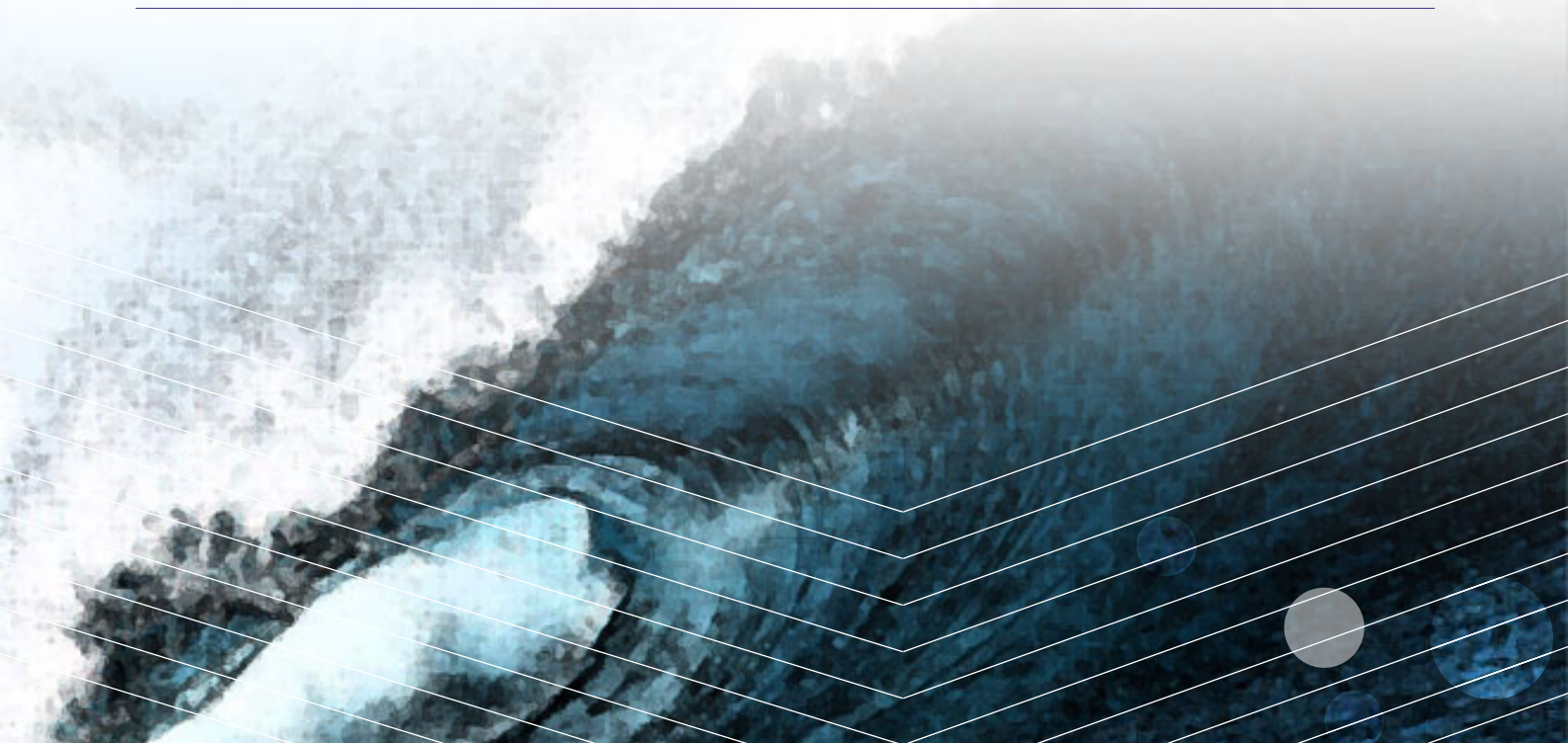
Every community has a community meeting once a month, maybe have education campaign at this community meetings in the language of the community. During community cultural events can show, mutual exchange that focus on culture and sexuality

Newspaper articles, writing in community specific print mags/newspapers in community languages

Internet forum that is not just for SSA people, but also for wider community to access and have dialogue especially if they want to find out more about SSA people

CONTENT: Something pitched like “your brother, your sister, you friend”, to get to people who otherwise don’t identify.

ANYTHING WITH HUMOUR!



Rob's Story

Indian-Portuguese-Malaysian gay male, 26; excerpt:

My family would probably know that I am gay, but they don't want to bring it up, they don't want to ask you. They don't really want to know.

So what you do is you try to find people other than your family who is gay. Even though they are gay, they won't tell you they are gay because they're scared that the family might know or they will hate you. Because of that you're invisible, right? But that's a long story.

You come to a new country and you start studying, you finish your studies. I was really scared to say that I am gay. I knew for a long time that I was, but I didn't have my residency and I was worried that if I go back I was going to be attacked by my family, they will hate me because they are Christians. From a Muslim country —I'm born in Malaysia. So you know, get punished and put in prison, stuff like that —all scares me.

I've got Grinder in my phone, people wonder what nationality you are. I just tell them I'm mixed. If they know you're not what they want, they don't really want to talk to you anymore. So that's where the conversation ends, like stops, if you're Asian, if you're Black, whatever.

If your parents are not educated, they have no idea what the hell is gay. They think you're crazy and they might put you in a mental institution. My family for some time they know, they thought God was going to help me, which was really funny. So when I came out, I finished all my studies and stuff, I start telling my mum, mum start slowly to understand. She wants to learn what's gay, what's homophobia, what's homosexual; maybe print out from the computer, she reads all that stuff and then she thinks maybe that's the way you're born, not something wrong with it. I don't care, I'm more than happy to say that I am. What are they going to do? Are they going to kill me?

I also found gay people bad on TV. Sometimes I feel really bad, you know how they act. I'm sitting there and open to my mum. Mardi Gras for example, wearing undies and doing all the crazy things, that puts me out.

I feel embarrassed. I haven't been to Mardi Gras, I wouldn't mind, but I wouldn't participate because it's crazy. It's not who I am. My parents, they see all this stuff, it's like, "Oh my god, is that what he is going to be like soon?" I said no.

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