

Leadership And Multicultural Program (LAMP) Overview

The *Leadership and Multicultural Program (LAMP)* is a program offered by the Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne) to primary schools to assist migrant and refugee students to settle into the school and celebrate cultural diversity within the school and broader community. The program has been running since September 2005 and, to date, the MIC has facilitated LAMP 13 schools across the Eastern Region of Melbourne. In 2010, LAMP will be implemented in Canterbury Primary School and St Timothy's Primary School (Vermont). The programs at all of these schools were initially funded by the School Focused Youth Services (SFYS) at Boroondara, Knox, Manningham/Maroondah, Monash and Whitehorse local government areas.

Background to the Project

The MIC conducted focus groups at Blackburn English Language School with recently arrived children. Through these focus groups it was identified that the kind of assistance the students felt would be beneficial to assist them in the transition to mainstream school fell into three main categories. These are practical aspects of school life, communication and language skills and social and emotional wellbeing. Through training leaders to support recently arrived students, and running cultural sessions focusing on new and emerging cultures in the community LAMP plays a major role in helping others to settle into their school and community.

Project Aims

LAMP has three aims:

- To increase the students knowledge and understanding of new and emerging cultural communities at their school and in their local community
- To assist CALD students to successfully settle in their primary school
- To teach leadership skills to a select group of grade five students

Methodology

LAMP was originally developed to run over three terms, but to make the program more affordable and accessible to schools it has since been shortened to two terms (20 weeks). There are three stages to the program: cultural sessions, leadership training and activities.

During the first four weeks of the program guest speakers are invited to present on their religion or cultural background and grade five students have an opportunity to ask questions. Cultural sessions have included presentations from speakers from the following cultural or religious backgrounds:

Buddhist
Chin (Burmese)
Chinese
Filipino
Greek
Indigenous Australian
Iranian

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Karen (Burmese)
Muslim
Sri Lankan
Sudanese

Grade 5 students are targeted for the leadership component of the program so that they can develop leadership skills before entering their final year of primary school. After the cultural session, interested grade fives are asked to nominate themselves for the position of LAMP leader. The successful candidates then undertake 2 half-day training sessions, where they learn about culture, the migrant and refugee experience, communication styles, listening skills, group decision-making skills, coping skills and leadership skills.

The LAMP leaders meet weekly to plan and facilitate activities to promote diversity and harmony in their primary school and assist students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to settle successfully into their primary school. Each group of leaders will plan and facilitate at least two activities. These activities can be on a small scale, involving the new students or specifically targeting those from a refugee or ESL background, or on a large scale involving the entire school. Examples of activities the LAMP leaders have facilitated include a welcome party and kit for new students; Australian cultural training for refugee students; junior school cultural training; multicultural concerts and festivals; Harmony Day activities, such as cultural workshops, cultural dress days and concerts; and Refugee Week events, including presentations to the school on the refugee experience and collections of donations to refugee and asylum seeker support services.

Conclusion

LAMP has been successfully implemented in the following schools:

Albany Rise Primary
Balwyn North Primary
Blackburn Lake Primary
Clayton North Primary
Eastwood Primary
Glen Waverley Primary
Great Ryrie Primary
Kew Primary
Park Ridge Primary
Parkhill Primary
Roberts McCubbin Primary
Rowville Primary
Sacred Heart Primary (Kew)
Waverley Meadows Primary

All schools have indicated that they have benefited from the program and that LAMP has made the school more inclusive and harmonious.

Comments from LAMP Leaders

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- *Through organising the activities I learnt a few things about different countries and public speaking*
- *It taught me lots of skills like leadership and organisation. I think leadership skills are very important because I am now a house captain*
- *I learnt how to communicate better and how to manage groups. I also made new friends*
- *LAMP is a good experience and I recommend it to other people*
- *I've learned how to communicate with people I don't normally talk to*
- *I have learned how to manage a large group*
- *I have learned to consider other people's ideas, not just my own*
- *I think being a LAMP Leader has been a great experience. Planning the party and the show was really fun.*
- *I felt proud that I could plan a party for the refugees of Great Ryrie*
- *It's the best! I think other people should try and experience being a LAMP leader*

Comments from LAMP Participants

- *It was good to meet new people so we can make friends (new student)*
- *The LAMP leaders were helpful and kind (new student)*
- *It was so good – I did not want to leave (new student)*
- *I was really excited that the LAMP leaders planned this for the new students*
- *I learnt that you should be nice to new students (Junior School student)*
- *I got to make more friends THANK YOU (new student)*

Comments from Teachers

- *The LAMP leaders have become a lot more considerate of other people and a lot more inclusive than they used to be*
- *LAMP not only encourages making friends, but changes the way friendships are made*
- *The program has helped the school become more of a community*

For further information please contact Sue Herbst at the Migrant Information Centre on 9285 4888 or email Sue on sherbst@miceastmelb.com.au