Co-designing and scaling effective COVID-19 communication strategies for young people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Victoria

FINAL REPORT
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Authors

Associate Professor Rebecca Wickes

Dr Charishma Ratnam

Dr Delvin Varghese

Professor Patrick Olivier

Rebecca Powell

Professor Helen Skouteris

Professor Liam Smith

Associate Professor Helen Forbes-Mewett

Dr Tom Bartindale

Kieran Hegarty

Acronyms

AKO	Australian Karen Organisation
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
DFFH	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
PINAS	Philippines Studies Network in Australia
VKCNG	Victorian Karen Communities Network Group
VyV	Voice your Voice

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1.0
Executive summary

1.1 Project background and purpose

The 2020 outbreak of COVID-19 resulted in a dramatic global uptake of digital technologies across all industries and sectors, and among individuals. With the increase in physical distancing measures and lockdowns, government, non-government, educational and community organisations enhanced their digital presence to remain connected with each other and with their end users. As the crisis unfolded, it was clear that government public health messages, disseminated through a range of digital channels, were not always reaching culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. Moreover, while many organisations found that digital technologies sustained connections that had been established before the pandemic, these technologies were less effective for extending networks to reach a wider audience. The COVID-19 pandemic revealed a pressing need for government and non-government organisations to better resource and build their skills and capacity for digital engagement with diverse communities, particularly those that rely on a number of digital platforms to engage with information.

This project sought to examine digital communication and engagement with a focus on CALD young people and the key organisations in Victoria working with them. In addition to conducting interviews with young people and non-government organisations, we partnered with five organisations working with CALD young people to advance a participatory, inclusive and digitally innovative approach to the design of a social media digital playbook. The playbooks were developed to encourage digital engagement and contained a series of strategies (or plays) that CALD youth–focused organisations can use to give young people a greater role and voice in engaging their peers through the digital technologies that they already have (mobile phones and tablets) and use (such as WhatsApp and Instagram). This approach placed young people at the forefront of engagement strategies.

The project comprised three phases, which are outlined below.

PHASE 1 involved interviews with CALD young people in Victoria aged between 18 and 25 to explore their COVID-19 information needs, attitudes, understandings and behavioural intentions. The CALD target groups were identified by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) and included young people from the following ethnic groups:

- Nepalese
- Colombian
- Indian
- Sudanese (Arabic speakers)
- Lebanese
- Iraqi.

PHASE 2 comprised interviews with organisations working with CALD young people in Victoria. The focus of these interviews was to better understand how these organisations delivered information to, and communicated with, their end users during the COVID-19 crisis and in the COVID-19 recovery period.

PHASE 3 involved working with organisations to co-develop playbooks, comprising a set of digital plays, that empowered bicultural workers[1] from five organisations to engage young people using social media activities around emerging topics related to the impact of COVID-19 on their communities. The five CALD organisations involved in the development of the digital playbooks were:

- the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY)
- YLab
- the Huddle
- Australian Karen Organisation (AKO)
- Migrante Melbourne.

These playbooks are available on the DFFH Youth Central website at playbook.actionlab.dev

1.2 Key findings

The three phases of the project uncovered key insights into CALD young people's experiences of COVID-19 *and* concerns for the future. Alongside the experiences of CALD young people, the project revealed nuanced understandings of the organisations that serviced, and worked with, young people. Four overarching themes emerged from this research.

Discerning credible COVID-19 evidence

The young people interviewed in Phase 1 relied on a range of sources to access COVID-19 information and health-related messages, including the mainstream media, Victorian government websites, social media, and instant messaging platforms. For most participants, these were trusted sources. Similar strategies were employed by the representatives of the organisations interviewed in Phase 2, who were often trusted bicultural workers or leaders in their diasporic communities. Many participants across both Phases 1 and 2 shared COVID-19 information with friends, family and their relevant communities and through their social media and instant messaging accounts. However, some participants expressed scepticism about unofficial sources and undertook extensive 'fact-checking' practices to ensure appropriate compliance. Only a few participants engaged with community organisations to access critical COVID-19 information. Temporary visa holders were less likely to engage with these organisations.

Overall, the findings from Phase 1 and Phase 2 demonstrate the important role of the digital sphere for young people and bicultural workers/community leaders in enabling them to access information and, in many instances, communicate and share this information with their networks. Thus, there is a need to ensure that young people have the requisite skills to evaluate the reliability of the information they access, which in turn may reduce the spread of misinformation among this cohort.

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1   A bicultural worker – also referred to as a bilingual, outreach or multicultural worker – is a person who works with specific people or communities where they share cultural experiences. Bicultural workers are employed to use their cultural and linguistic knowledge to communicate between these communities and their employer (Boughtwood et al. 2011; Centre for Multicultural Youth, 2011).

Youth-led and co-designed communication strategies

Phase 3 highlighted that there is a clear and pressing need for support, especially for organisations that work directly with CALD young people (including hardly reached young people), to develop and refine strategies related to the production and dissemination of information using digital media. Effective engagement with hardly reached young people is a challenge that many organisations and community leaders face. This challenge was intensified during the pandemic. Offering support not only to youth-facing organisations but also to CALD young people themselves is critical to ensuring that mutual trust and respect are achieved. Creating tasks that are youth-led and co-designed is key to successful engagement practices that can extend beyond crises. Communication strategies will likely have greater reach and impact when young people from CALD communities in Victoria, and the organisations engaging with them, have the skills and resources to access, engage with and make sense of important information.

Understanding organisational ecologies and networks

During the crisis, the organisations interviewed in Phase 2 maintained ties with CALD young people, and many developed new relationships with other organisations. From an organisational perspective, these relationships between organisations were critical to ensuring wider reach, especially in relation to the dissemination of COVID-19 information. The COVID-19 recovery phase has provided an opportunity to continue these collaborations between organisations, allowing for more co-designed digital innovations and ensuring that communities are reached more widely. Critical to supporting these collaborations is better understanding of the organisational ecologies that exist within the sector, which will provide an overall capture of how organisations are networked, and the type of reach and impact they have when they collaborate. As a result, establishing more opportunities for organisations to work together, and for specific organisations to connect based on their remits, resources and skills, is essential for wider reach to CALD communities. Moreover, the organisations interviewed are in a key position to leverage their existing networks to develop reciprocal communication strategies that are situated within the hybrid landscape we will be entering in the future, which will involve digital technologies but will also rely on the in-person engagements that are invaluable for maintaining trust and shared values between organisations and young people. In this regard, many organisations are limited by their skill levels and/or resources, including personnel, funding and material equipment (such as laptops, tablets and internet modems).

Peer-to-peer learning networks for young people

Across all phases of the project, it was evident that for information to have meaning it needs to be disseminated to, and embedded within, networks that are based on adequate representation (among CALD young people and facilitators who have had lived experiences of challenges that are relatable to young people), relationships of trust, and shared values. It is also important to create conditions for young people to develop learning networks with each other. These collaborations are beneficial as they involve young people learning from each other and they ensure that young people's voices are heard in the wider community. While much of this project focused on the ways that young people used digital technologies during the pandemic, the current recovery phase offers opportunities for in-person collaborations to flourish, which will allow young people to address the social issues facing their communities and maintain trusting relationships with each other in the process.

1.3 Strategic opportunities

Drawing on the findings from all phases of this project, below we offer four strategic opportunities in alignment with the key findings, for uptake by local and state governments working with CALD young people and/or organisations that service migrant communities. Please see the main body of the report (Section 3.0) for the details of the complete set of strategic opportunities.

Strategic Opportunity 1: Empower young people and bicultural workers to be active communicators who engage with, and share, credible information.

Strategic Opportunity 2: Develop engagement strategies that enhance existing relationships of trust.

Strategic Opportunity 3: Understanding organisational ecologies: Conduct a stocktake of organisations that serve CALD communities to understand their remit and the nuanced ways in which they are networked.

Strategic Opportunity 4: Develop stronger peer-to-peer networks to strengthen collective organisational capacities.

1.4 Actionable steps

The strategic opportunities above inform a number of actionable steps that can be taken by the state government and organisations that work with CALD young people. These steps focus on empowering young people, empowering the organisations that work with them, and creating a knowledge base of effective digital engagement strategies that can be used for both everyday issues and in times of crisis. For the full details of each actionable step, see Section 4.0 in the body of the report.

Empowering CALD young people

1. **Conduct a baseline study to better understand the existing digital literacies** and capabilities of CALD young people, to scope their literacies, platforms/modes of engagement and points of information consumption during times of crisis (formal and informal).

2. **Create learning pathways for CALD young people, including hardly reached young people,** which involve training in digital engagement technologies where young people are explicitly taught to discern what information is trustworthy and accurate.

3. Create a plan to specifically **engage hardly reached CALD young people** with skill- and trust-building activities. This can be achieved by **elevating the practice of storytelling** among CALD young people as a means to facilitate the co-design of participatory government and community messaging and information sharing.

4. **Create new employment opportunities for young CALD leaders** to engage with their broader community on important issues that matter to them.

Empowering CALD organisations

5. **Co-design engagements** with youth workers from CALD community organisations so that digital and in-person processes are configured to align with the lived experiences and digital capacities of the young people they work with.

6. Implement **targeted training sessions** for emerging and established bicultural workers and community leaders to strengthen their digital communication and engagement skills, including during times of crisis.

7. **Build on or develop funding initiatives** that are specifically designed for organisations to collaborate on particular project or program development or implementation that are focused on digital technologies/engagements.

8. **Connect organisations to build partnerships**, such as joining established organisations with newer or more informal/grassroots organisations to fill certain gaps related to skills, resources, reach and knowledge.

Creating a knowledge base for effective digital engagement practices

9. Conduct a **baseline study** of organisations that work with CALD young people to **map their ecologies**.

10. Re-engage with organisations that work with CALD communities to **identify the digital strategies they used that effectively enhanced networks, trust and the sharing of information** during the initial phases of the COVID-19 crisis and the recovery period. **Seek out information on the digital engagement strategies that did not achieve the intended objectives** to identify practices that are unlikely to work in response to future crises.

2.0
Project background

Social relations are increasingly being forged and extended through digital technologies. Seeking to understand the impact of various technologies on social relations, social science and media researchers are exploring how our increasing reliance on technology in our everyday lives can enhance, change or undermine social connection (Halford & Savage, 2010; Choi & Shin, 2017). A particular focus has been on the 'digital divide' and broader inequalities related to the need to engage with digital technologies in order to participate meaningfully in society (van Dijk, 2006). More recently, researchers have shifted their focus to examine complex *socio-technical systems*. Socio-technical systems comprise technologies, people and other elements that combine to enable and sustain social relationships and social processes. Central to this is a focus on technologies that are embedded in, and productive of, social relations built on trust, reciprocity and shared values that can manifest in benefits for individuals, groups and/or society.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, organisations rapidly embedded technology into their day-to-day engagement with end users. Yet, embedding technology without a concomitant focus on how technology can activate trust and shared values may not yield the desired engagement aims. We argue that digital technologies must be strategically harnessed to increase engagement, strengthen trust and broaden the reach of organisations concerned with improving the lives of CALD young people. Organisations, in particular those that work with young people from CALD backgrounds, are impactful in achieving their organisational aims when they can create networks that are based on trust and shared values. Further, research demonstrates that when young people co-create digital media, they not only develop social and technical skills but also learn how to deliver messages that are (sub)culturally relevant to the needs of the target group (O'Mara, 2013; O'Mara & Harris, 2016). This provides us with strong foundational principles that we extend upon in this project, which include:

- Using the processes involved in the production of media as a site for the development of new networks and skills. The development of media is as much about the process of development (as a way to develop social and technical skills) as the form it eventually takes (as an effective, targeted message).
- Using narrative and storytelling techniques for the elicitation of health issues that are relevant to the community involved. Again, the process of developing relevant media will benefit from leveraging the form in which information sharing takes place (that is, existing social processes can be leveraged in developing digital media).

This report reveals the experiences of COVID-19 among CALD young people aged between 18 and 25 in relation to their engagement with, and sharing of, information about the pandemic. While the research was originally designed to examine engagement during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Victoria, as the State moved into a period of recovery, the focus of the project shifted to include the primary concerns of young people as they attempted to navigate employment, rising mental health issues, and the new 'COVID-19 world'. The research team used an innovative co-designed methodological approach, which included interviews with young people and the organisations that work with them, as well as the development of bespoke digital playbooks specifically designed to enhance digital engagement between organisations and CALD young people. The knowledge that emerges from this report is critical to assisting government and other

agencies to develop strategies that enhance organisational networks and participatory digital engagements for use in everyday practices, but which can be leveraged in response to crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic or other environmental disasters, when needed.

The project comprised three distinct but related phases:

PHASE 1: To identify how young people (aged 18–25) from CALD communities in Victoria accessed, understood and acted upon COVID-19 outbreak information.

The CALD target groups identified by DFFH for Phase 1 were:

- Nepalese
- Colombian
- Indian
- Sudanese (Arabic speakers)
- Lebanese
- Iraqi.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 CALD young people in Phase 1, supported by the LOTE Agency, which assisted with participant recruitment and provided translators where required.

PHASE 2: To examine how key organisations working with CALD young people in Victoria deliver information to, and communicate with, their end users.

The Monash research team conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 organisations working with CALD young people in Victoria for Phase 2. In addition, we have included insights captured from interviews with another 23 organisations from an MMIC project conducted at the outset of the COVID-19 crisis as they relate to the use of technology to facilitate and support intercultural engagement.

PHASE 3: To develop co-designed digital playbooks with five organisations that represent CALD young people (see Table 1), including the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY), YLab, the Huddle, AKO and Migrante Melbourne. The team worked with these partner organisations to co-design tailored digital playbooks as an effective mode of participatory engagement for, and with, CALD young people to disseminate COVID-19 and associated priority information. The playbooks were designed with the view to: (a) inform communication strategies during crises, (b) encourage active engagement between users and organisations on important and priority issues, and (c) adapt and scale to meet the emergent challenges of participant engagement using digital technologies in times of crisis and quiescence.

These playbooks are available on the DFFH Youth Central website playbook.actionlab.dev

Table 1: Motivation and playbook activities by organisation

Organisation	Years of operation	Size of organisation	Community connections	Motivation	Playbook activities
CMY	33 years (since 1988)	135 staff	Young people from a range of migrant and refugee backgrounds	Le Mana initiative, working with disengaged Maori-Pasifika youth, helping improve engagement with community support services. COVID highlighted the access gap to services such as foodbanks.	*Community Video* **HOW:** Training CMY Le Mana facilitators and Maori-Pasifika youth to produce stories using visual social media platforms that youth use.
YLab	5 years (since 2016)	48 staff, including full-time, part-time and casual associates	A range of CALD communities across Australia including Asian-Australian, African-Australian, and Pasifika	Multicultural Affairs and Cultural Cohesion (MASC) funded project training youth from 24 autonomous organisations serving African and Pasifika youth.	*Audio Journalism and Community Podcasting* **HOW**: devising a podcasting model using smartphones and offering this as a training module alongside YLab's offering.
Migrante	16 years (since 2005)	120 staff	Filipino community	International students and Filipino youth were adversely affected by COVID restrictions. Migrante wants to share "stories of strength" to raise the visibility of these students and create community stories that can be used for advocacy.	*PhotoVoice: Audio Storytelling with Slideshow* **HOW:** Migrante volunteers will facilitate teams of International students to ideate (over social media) and share their stories.
AKO	23 years (since 1998)	1 paid staff Volunteers Board Membership of 8 persons	Karen community	The turn to online meetings has severely hampered AKO's ability to connect their communities who speak many languages (English, Pwo and Sgaw).	*Supporting multilingual live events* **HOW:** Breaking down skill barriers to live events and training youth volunteers in supporting live events through social media.
Huddle	11 years (since 2010)	24 staff (full and part-time)	Local Governments, Melbourne Over 200 different cultural groups including, African, Asian, Indonesian, Pasifika, Aboriginal	Huddle's Voice your Voice (VyV) initiative, working in *"alternative schools where some students have significant gaps in their learning, skills and knowledge"*. Digital capabilities disrupted by COVID.	*Community Video in Schools* **HOW:** Designing a tailored collaborative video process that will be culturally appropriate to Huddle's youth in schools in the West-end.

2.1 Overview of the Report

This report provides a set of strategic opportunities and actionable steps based on a project commissioned by the DFFH that examined CALD young people's experiences of COVID-19, especially pertaining to their use of digital technologies to share information and engage with community organisations. The report integrates the key findings from Phases 1 and 2, and synthesises reflections from Phase 3 of the project, which involved the co-development of digital playbooks between organisations and young people. In-depth discussions on the methodologies used, limitations and challenges of the project, and the findings from Phases 1 and 2, can be found in Appendices 1, 2 and 3.

In what follows, we present four strategic opportunities that incorporate case study evidence derived from all phases of the project. We then detail the actionable steps that state and local governments can take to empower organisations and young people and strengthen their networks.

3.0
Strategic Opportunities

The findings from this project, especially those from Phases 2 and 3, demonstrate that organisations are particularly effective when they can:

- respond to a deficit of trust in the state or mainstream society

- act as a mediator between institutional and community actors

- prevent disengagement from education, employment and other social ties during periods of limited interaction

- provide alternative or complementary modes of social engagement and/or political participation

- assist end users with access to government support

- provide a buffer for, and build resilience against racism and discrimination manifested at both a systemic (racialised disadvantage, labour market segmentation) and relational level (racial profiling, verbal/ physical abuse).

In light of the findings across all phases of this project, below we detail four strategic opportunities for local and state governments working with CALD young people and/or organisations who service migrant communities.

3.1 SO 1: Empower young people and bicultural workers to be active communicators who engage with, and share, credible information

Across all three phases of the project, we engaged with CALD people who were active messengers and translators of COVID-19 information, either informally or professionally. At first glance, the use of informal messaging may be concerning, given the amount of misinformation that circulated among CALD communities during the early stages of the pandemic. However, informal messaging takes place within communities regardless of the particular crisis, and we found that, in almost every case identified in our research, young people were clarifying and providing accurate state-disseminated information to their community members where other agents within the community had propagated incorrect or misleading information. As active users of multiple social media spaces, these young people triangulated information flows – something older community members, who were predominantly only on one or two platforms, were less likely to do.

There is a strategic opportunity to address such concerns (about misinformation) by empowering young people to intentionally develop the skills needed to become trusted communicators of information. They can learn skills to use digital technologies to evaluate the credibility and reliability of news and information, and methods of communicating important messages to their communities and households. Targeted training for bicultural workers is also embedded within this opportunity due to their critical reach into, and trust among,

their communities. Opening up skill-building opportunities for both young people and bicultural workers is crucial in enabling the government to identify a group of existing *and* emerging young leaders across CALD communities who are trusted and reliable, and who have demonstrated their ability to communicate accurate and targeted information to their households, community and peers.

Producing highly engaging media formats that are popular within the wider youth culture, such as podcasts and short well-produced videos, is often beyond the reach of ordinary young people and emerging youth leaders. However, increasingly, there are attempts to create pathways for individuals to gain these key skills so that they can become positive agents of change in their communities. Yet such efforts need to be supported by collaborative models of media production. Only empowering select individuals (as is commonly done in participatory arts projects) risks further perpetuating a technological divide between the haves and have-nots in terms of digital capabilities, as only a few will gain the means for effective mass broadcasting. Embracing a collectivist orientation is the best approach (particularly as such an approach is favourable to people from non-individualistic cultures). This can be achieved through the creation of new toolkits for collaborative podcasting and video-making. Media production is inherently a multi-skilled role, and the various constituent skills (planning, directing, capturing, editing and publishing) can be treated as bite-sized skills in which a collective of individuals can be trained. Not only does this build capacity at a collective level, but it can also lead to more sustainable impact, as the digital skill acquisition is not concentrated within a few individuals.

In addition, the training spaces for these media production tasks are online: Facebook groups and Instagram walls. The training activities themselves serve as an inclusive, 'risk-free' environment for trainees to put their newly acquired skills into practice in the immediate social media environment in which they are gaining these skills. For example, training events on video production can be conducted as an online workshop series that follows a blended learning model (such that participants learn and produce content before, during and after the training sessions). Artefacts produced as part of the activities can themselves be used to promote the organisational aims, for instance, to improve awareness about the plight of international students from a particular community during the COVID-19 crisis.

As discussed above, young people are sharing information with their friends, families and those in their social networks. Deliberately designing for this phenomenon can lead to more productive results than doubling down on it. Organisations should be supported in designing social media conversation packs (similar to the DHHS packs for COVID-19 restrictions), which can help them proactively anticipate conversations within the community around crisis situations.

CASE STUDY EVIDENCE:

Young people and bicultural workers as intergenerational messengers

The informal translation and dissemination of information was significant among the CALD young people interviewed in Phase 1. CALD young people regularly passed on important COVID-19 information to their parents, grandparents, peers and other people in their community. Often, these messages were shared via social media or instant messaging platforms. As one participant explained, this sharing of information was done in an ad-hoc manner, given the constantly changing nature of the pandemic:

> [I used to] pretty much wait for 10 o'clock to come. I [had] Facebook, Channel 9, Channel 7 media outlets [turned on]. As soon as you get a message, you relay [it] back to the community [and you] probably get a text message from WhatsApp or something. [The rules were] no attending gatherings, [gatherings have] been minimised, don't go to work, and then you just make follow-up calls with people that didn't understand. (Participant 7, Lebanese)

Derick Anies / Unsplash
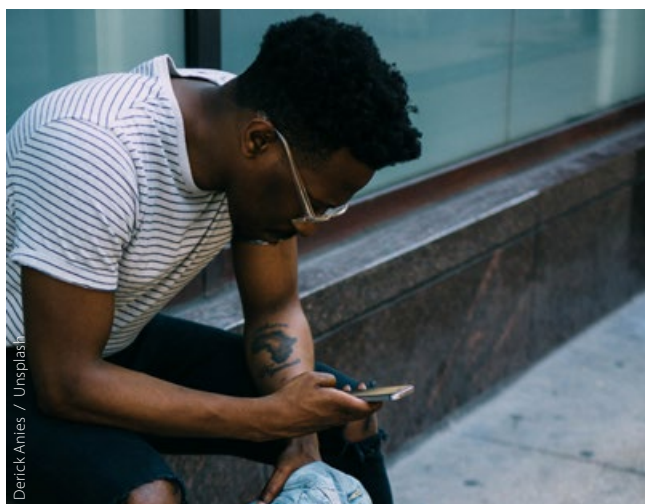
While young people were informally communicating important messages to their peers and families, many organisations interviewed in Phase 2 saw themselves as responding to, and ameliorating, the deficit of trust in government institutions that existed among CALD young people. One youth organisation interviewed suggested that its users distanced 'themselves from mainstream organisations', with the result that this organisation had to 'repair [this trust deficit] from our connection with them to other services in their area' (African youth organisation, Victoria). Thus, the role that organisations played became even more important as information needed to be fed back into communities who had lost trust in formal services and stakeholders.

Organisations had specific models of peer facilitation or peer-to-peer engagements that involved training CALD young people to share information and to provide guidance and support to others. These models have the benefit of encouraging and enabling the development of skills and networks among both facilitators and participants, supporting the (re)production of trust and shared values among CALD youth. For many organisations, bicultural workers were a crucial conduit for passing on information due to the trust they had developed with young people and their wider community prior to the crisis. One participant from Phase 2 explained that their organisation employed a number of techniques to communicate with older people in the African community regarding COVID-19. This organisation's staff were best placed to be disseminators of information given that they were trusted members of the diaspora themselves:

> So we specifically had to record audios [and] videos and then we had to share that on social media, but at the same time ... we organised Zoom sessions for elder members of the community and then we were able to just basically bring [in an expert on] infectious disease to actually explain what the disease was and we had interpreters. We were constantly messaging older members of the community through WhatsApp. So we were sending constantly updated messages [about] COVID-19, what was happening, what [lockdown] stage we were in, what type of symptoms [were associated with the virus], [and] if someone had those kind of symptoms what they needed to do. (Grassroots community organisation, Victoria)

CASE STUDY EVIDENCE:
YLab

YLAB

Developing podcasting skills through zoom workshops and peer mentoring
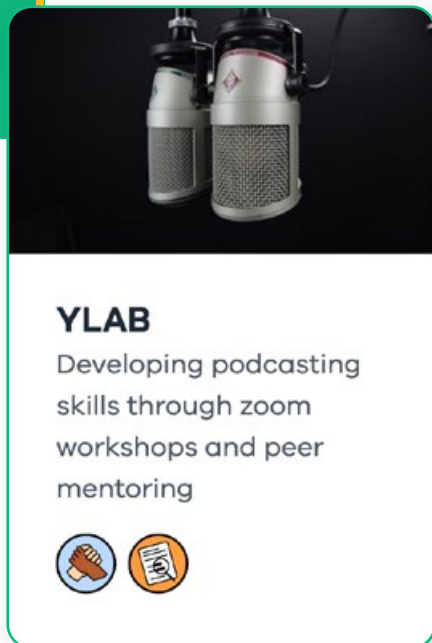
YLab is a consultancy social enterprise consisting primarily of young people whose key focus is on the social challenges faced by those located in Melbourne's western suburbs. In Phase 3, we worked with six youth associates from YLab to provide training in social media–driven podcasts as part of their professional development. This training enabled youth workers who were often at the frontline of efforts to disseminate important information to access broadcasting tools that reach young people via mediums with which they are familiar.

Podcasting, in particular, has become an important medium in Australia for engaging young people. Unfortunately, beyond the individual efforts of some organisations, little attention has been paid to how podcasting can be leveraged as a strategy for empowering young people to mobilise each other on social issues. Podcasting has received limited attention as a youth engagement strategy by community organisations because of the barriers to accessing the skills needed for traditional podcasting models (audio capture and editing skills) and the costs (of procuring equipment for audio recording and editing). We designed an approach to train YLab associates that relied on using social media for coordination and mobile phones and low-cost tools to facilitate the entire podcasting workflow. A key learning from this activity was that there is a need for more standardised approaches so that community organisations can leverage youth-friendly broadcasting approaches during times of crisis.

Pathways forward

The findings from the research project revealed the importance of communicating accurate messages to household members and the wider community, especially through digital technologies such as YLab's podcast. Certainly, misinformation and confusion were prevalent due to the rapid responses of the government to the COVID-19 crisis. A reduced trust in government responses was also reported by CALD young people. This strategic opportunity is centred around the need for adequate and targeted training that is readily available to young people and bicultural workers. This training will involve young people developing new types of communication skills (that is, through digital and in-person engagements) and bicultural workers strengthening their digital communication and engagement strategies. As the results show, young people have the potential to be active communicators since they have already established relationships of trust in their households and the wider community. Identifying emerging young leaders and trusted bicultural workers within specific CALD communities will be beneficial for the government in seeking to address particular social, environmental and health-related issues.

3.2 SO 2: Develop engagement strategies that enhance existing relationships of trust

The project uncovered two key findings: first, that maintaining relationships of trust is key to meaningful digital engagement (Phase 2); and second, that *participatory* engagement through digital storytelling is most valuable when it is co-designed and youth-led (Phase 3). Participation can build trust while empowering young people to relay meaningful and impactful priority messages and information to their communities, especially when they (the young people) are represented in the messaging itself.

Parallel to the civic structures in the physical world with which young people engage, the virtual world presents a host of challenges for authorities such as local and state governments who want to connect with young people. Young people are selective in the sources that they trust, and they value authenticity in their digital communication. Therefore, engagement strategies need to go beyond information dissemination to embrace models of digital participation that give young people creative control over how messages are articulated and that recognise the particular nuances of community challenges that young people are best placed to address, as people with lived experiences. Such an approach will lead to non-tokenistic participation and young people will be trusted more by their peers.

Youth workers from organisations need to take the lead in engaging with young people to understand the ways in which they like to receive critical information. Organisations often resort to one-to-many dissemination platforms as they are not labour-intensive and represent a low-cost option (such as posting on an official Facebook page or placing advertisements on Instagram). However, for deeper engagement, young people need to be positioned at the heart of the action. They need to be involved in designing online activities that will help them in engaging their peers in many-to-many interactions, such as online competitions that encourage young people to share their voice and discussion boards with incentives to come up with community challenges.

Young people use various social media platforms in very different ways. For instance, Facebook is seen as an official platform, inhabited by their parents, the older generation and official institutions (their school or sporting clubs). As such, their interactions in that space are completely different from those on other networks like TikTok or Snapchat, where they feel freer to be their authentic selves, and free from the gaze of the mainstream public or from symbols of authority. Reaching young people in these spaces therefore requires great care. An official advertisement placed in a non-mainstream space like Snapchat risks being seen as intrusive and overreaching. On the other hand, a photo-taking challenge run by another young person in that space might encourage greater engagement.

There are particular difficulties engaging with hardly reached young people, especially during crisis events. There is a need to extend engagement strategies that are hybrid in nature, leverage the existing trust between organisations and young people (especially hardly reached young people), and focus on the concerns and needs of young people. Addressing these concerns through engagements may then allow for the dissemination of other messages or information that are of concern for government and non-government organisations. In this study, the primary concerns of young people and organisations were centred around young people's employment prospects, mental health, disrupted education, and navigating the 'new COVID world'.

CASE STUDY EVIDENCE:

CMY's Le Mana Project

CMY

Video production with
Maori-Pasifika youth
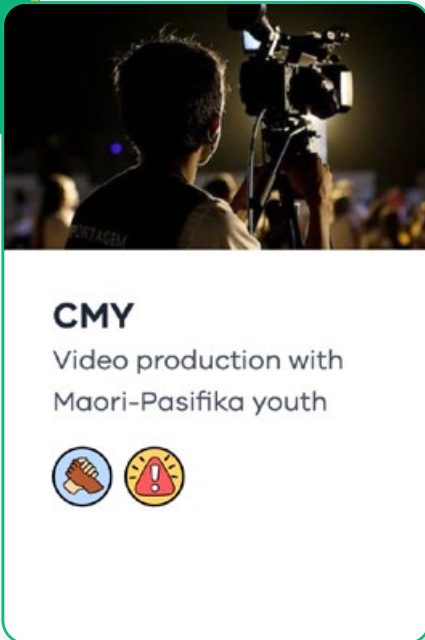
CMY's Le Mana (Empower) Pasifika Project is aimed at strengthening communities and creating a sense of belonging for Maori and Pasifika young people in Victoria. To support this project, the Monash team worked with Le Mana to design a community storytelling through video initiative. This initiative brought together young people to share their stories of living, working and playing sports in the western suburbs of Melbourne and the ways in which they want to bring about social change to address the challenges they face. Key skills around storytelling and video capture and editing were taught to participants to augment their existing digital capacities. The focus was on foregrounding young people's lived experiences, with the newly acquired digital skills to enable the development of their pre-existing stories and skills. As such, young people were working in spaces and using narratives with which they were comfortable. Crucially, we carried out our engagement in a hybrid mode, consisting of both in-person and online working sessions, in response to the community's need to come together to brainstorm and carry out the filming activities together. This also required that we come up with new processes for collective and participatory video-making.

Young people's lived experiences are diverse, and there is a cohort of hardly reached young people who require particular attention and care in terms of providing them with opportunities for engagement. Community organisations and government institutions can play a critical part in this type of engagement, for example, by strengthening the trust and communication between bicultural workers and community leaders and young people. If trust and respect are established between these young people and organisations, there will be an effective flow of information, including from government, during future crises or community challenges. While some organisations (like CMY) are already engaging in this capacity, there is a clear need to ensure that trust is built between hardly reached young people and government and community organisations to support the creation of pathways to learning more about digital technologies, through tasks that ensure the stories of young people are captured and heard.

John Kan / Unsplash

CASE STUDY EVIDENCE:

Communication by young people, for young people

The Phase 2 interviews consistently revealed the value of developing communication strategies that are led by youth, for youth. One of the organisations, for example, devised strategies that empowered young people to consider themselves well informed on a topic, share their experience, and find ways to support others:

> *My deep belief is that young people will listen if it comes from other young people or it's … people who look … and sound like them. I think the more … we can build the capacity of young people to share those messages … the more effective they're going to be.* (Multicultural youth organisation, Victoria)

Organisations noted the importance of adequate representation of young people in their communications and the need to avoid tokenistic gestures of inclusion. Successful engagement was attributed, in part, to having staff who were representative of the organisation's end users:

> *I mean just making sure that the young people that you are engaging … just making sure that the people that are running that workshop or … facilitating that project are in fact … the young people from that community. So they're not just like the token young … Indigenous person in the room or the token Asian kid in the room. And the fact that we make sure that this space – whether virtual or not – that they're able to feel safe within this space. So we will make sure that we touch base with them before, if there's any accessibility issues that they have or any topics … that they don't want discussed, we'll just make sure that is disclosed to us beforehand, and just having facilitators that are trained to engage with … young people from diverse backgrounds.*

> *How [do we] engage [with] different groups? It's because of the diversity of our staff … If we can unlock the potential of young people having meaningful employment opportunities through work like ours, that's going to be a big part of the special sauce, if you like, to be able to grow our work and deepen our levels of engagement to help young people belong.* (Multicultural youth organisation, Victoria)

CASE STUDY EVIDENCE:

Engaging with hardly reached young people

Many organisations we worked with in Phases 2 and 3 of the project focused some of their programs on engaging hardly reached young people in Victoria. A representative of one such organisation explained that the process of engaging with these young people is complex:

> *You've got to understand that there's a lot of people who are engaged with mainstream services ... In saying that, there's also a whole other group of young people who would never in a million years look at organisations, [those young people are] very hard to reach. [It is] very complex. They're not at your local libraries, they're not at your local community centres, they're not at your local parks. No. These young people [are] so disengaged and disconnected from [the] community, that's the cohort where information might not get to.* (Youth organisation, Victoria)

The representative then went on to explain that trust and respect are fundamental to building connections with these young people. With reciprocal trust and respect, the organisation is able to create a two-way engagement:

> *What we do, and I think it is taking time, and I think it comes with trust, it comes with respect, and it comes with a certain understanding of these young people's journey[s], where we need to tap into those connections. We're able to tap into those cohorts of young people ... So, what we're able to do is engage with those very difficult cohorts, get information through to them. But also, feed information back.* (Youth organisation, Victoria)

As this example illustrates, community organisations are a critical connection point for hardly reached young people. The relationships of trust they have with this group become even more important when crisis events occur and information needs to be shared. In turn, the voices of these hardly reached young people should inform the creation of youth-led engagement.

Pathways forward

Phases 2 and 3 of the project certainly demonstrated that empowering young people to share their stories and experiences is valuable, especially if it can be related to the communication of important information. Developing engagement strategies that are co-designed and youth-led will have several benefits for government and non-government agencies alike. Importantly, involving young people in the co-design of engagement strategies will allow for peer-to-peer learning networks to flourish while simultaneously embedding storytelling into the process. Another benefit is that trust between organisations and young people will increase, including hardly reached young people who would gain from collaborating with their peers. This will also provide an opportunity for hardly reached young people to tell their stories and develop a range of important skills related to digital engagement.

3.3 SO 3: Understanding organisational ecologies: Conduct a stocktake of organisations that serve CALD communities to understand their remit and the nuanced ways in which they are networked

This project involved working with five community organisations to develop a digital playbook that brought to the fore the diverse and distinct structures within each organisation. Working with the CALD community organisations also revealed the nuanced ways in which they worked with other organisations or groups to serve the broader CALD community. These five organisations served CALD communities in different ways, based on their specific strengths and specialist areas of focus. We refer to these structures and networks as organisational ecologies. Based on our engagements, we identified two distinct, yet interlinking levels of organisational ecology:

1. **Meso level** – grassroots organisations and community groups (of varying sizes) that work together to achieve goals common to the CALD community that they serve. For example, such organisations may work together to offer homework support for at-risk youth or seek to engage hardly reached young people in specific CALD communities.

2. **Macro level** – organisations that connect with different societal institutions that engage with CALD people (and young CALD people in particular) are present. For example, these could be organisations that are affiliated and work with sporting clubs, schools and religious institutions to engage CALD youth around social issues.

Understanding organisational ecologies involves gathering knowledge of an organisation's internal structures, the remit of the services offered, and the strengths and interconnectedness of their networks with community members and other organisations. While such understanding requires identifying partner organisations and other organisational links, there is also a need to examine whether these links are formal or informal, the specific communities these organisations target and reach, their communication strategies and digital resources and capabilities, and the priorities of and challenges facing both the organisation and their target communities.

For example, the way in which organisations are linked with each other through social media channels is an indicator of their working relationships and of the social tools they prefer to use to engage with their particular communities. This information helps to: a) paint a picture of the digital ecosystem of each CALD community; and b) understand how CALD young people choose to represent themselves online.

It is essential to gain a clearer understanding of the ecologies of existing and potential organisations with which state and local governments can partner to engage with CALD young people to inform the development of effective engagement tools and strategies. This will be built on recognition of the nuanced and varied ways in which organisations and community members use digital spaces to articulate their challenges and find solutions, for instance, by using online tools to hold discussions or run campaigns.

CASE STUDY EVIDENCE:
Meso organisational ecologies of Migrante Melbourne

Migrante Melbourne

Mounting youth-led advocacy campaigns through social media

Migrante Melbourne is a community organisation that serves Filipinos and Filipino Australians living in Victoria. We partnered with this organisation to better understand how a social media playbook might support its work around meeting the challenges faced by young Filipinos. We discovered that Migrante worked closely with four other community associations (representing meso-level organisations) on joint initiatives to fulfil its mission. Facebook was its main social networking site of choice, and it used Pages, Groups and Messenger (group chats) in nuanced ways to engage its constituents. When planning a social media campaign, Migrante would utilise Messenger groups to bring together young people from the meso-level organisations with which it worked. When a project to support young Filipinos and international students is initiated, Migrante would collaborate with Anakbayan (a youth activism organisation) and PINAS (Philippines Studies Network in Australia – A group of Filipino scholars involved in Filipino diasporic and cultural studies) (Figure 1). While Migrante Melbourne has many skilled volunteers who are proficient in designing resources for the organisation's online campaigns, it remains intricately linked to the other two organisations, which allows further reach to ensure that its messaging is both appropriate and accessible to young people.

Figure 1: Meso organisational ecologies of Migrante Melbourne
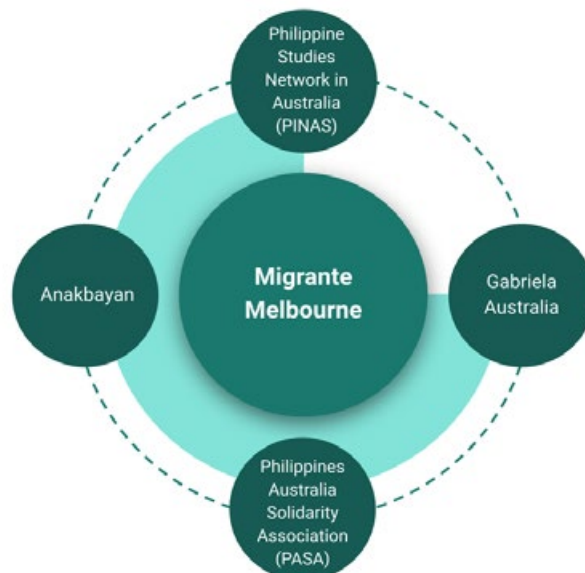
CASE STUDY EVIDENCE:
Macro organisational ecologies

Three examples of macro organisational ecologies emerged from Phase 3 of the project. The Huddle, YLab and AKO drew on their connections with other institutions to address the social challenges faced by CALD young people in different ways, dependent on how each organisation's structure could be leveraged to meet young people's specific needs (Figure 2).

1. The Huddle, the community organisation wing of the North Melbourne Football Club, works with other institutions, such as Mount Alexander College, to build meaningful connections with school-aged young people. The Huddle leverages the credibility it has gained from its association with North Melbourne Football Club to establish such links.

2. YLab operates through an individualised model whereby it trains 'Youth Associates' who are empowered to serve different CALD young people. As such, the Youth Associates are best placed to support young people from other grassroots migrant organisations. Phase 3 revealed that YLab was well-known for this role among other youth organisations with whom we spoke.

3. AKO is an intimately networked organisation serving the Karen community in Australia. It has community collaborations built into the fabric of its working model and leads a network of Karen organisations to strengthen opportunities for Karen people across Australia.

Nesa by Makers / Unsplash

The interviews with non-CALD community facing organisations also revealed the importance of organisational ecologies for understanding the different networks that exist across institutions. For example, a representative of one of the local councils we interviewed described the different ways the council engaged with young people:

> *We tackle strategic community development projects, with a key focus on working with young people on those projects and building their leadership skills and their capacity. We then have a youth participation and engagement team who are out doing a lot more program work ... So [we create] easy access points for young people, whether it be through sport or youth committees or music programs, just providing a range of access points for young people to connect with our service and to connect with youth workers and their community.* (Local council in Victoria)

Linked to this is the interconnection among bicultural workers from these organisations. Many of the bicultural workers from the organisations involved in our project were enmeshed within local governments' engagement with young people. They also maintained close connections with religious institutions across CALD communities, further highlighting the expanse of the macro-level ecologies that exist. For example, AKO worked closely with churches and monasteries as most of the organisation's constituents identify as Christian or Buddhist.

Figure 2: Macro organisational ecologies
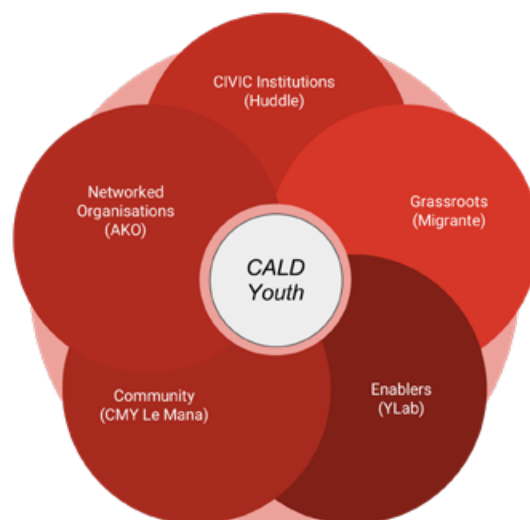
Pathways forward

Mapping organisational ecologies will be instrumental for local and state government efforts to facilitate engagement with CALD community–focused organisations. Moreover, a stocktake of these organisational ecologies at the macro and meso levels will ensure that relevant government agencies have their finger on the pulse of the sector, including a better understanding of the needs and capacities of organisations. This could lead to collaborations between organisations (see Strategic Opportunity 4).

To effectively support such collaborations, a stocktake of organisational ecologies would allow for a better understanding of:

1. How CALD-focused organisations responded during the COVID-19 crisis, what the priority needs were/are (during and following the crisis), and how these organisations have adapted to the new hybrid model of engagement.

2. The modes of digital engagement with CALD communities employed by organisations (such as whether they broadcast information or carry out more participatory forms of engagement with specific communities/community members) during and outside crisis periods, understanding what worked and did not work during the crisis, and what could be enhanced or altered.

3. Who the key organisations that work with particular CALD communities are and how they work together, what the key strengths and capabilities of individual organisations are, and how these align with their collaborative work to serve the broader target community.

This approach is a valuable starting point as it will provide a baseline understanding of not only the internal structures and networks of organisations, but also their digital capacities and resourcing. This understanding will become crucial as local and state governments seek to quickly mobilise community resources and tailor digital engagement strategies during future crises, especially as it relates to hardly reached groups.

3.4 SO 4: Develop stronger peer-to-peer networks to strengthen collective organisational capacities

Phases 2 and 3 revealed that many organisations have strong working relationships with each other. Many of these connections were further leveraged during the pandemic to respond to the diverse needs of the target communities and in line with the varying levels of reach and trust organisations had with their target communities. It would be beneficial to create funding pathways for organisations that wish to strengthen their collaborative partnerships and peer-to-peer networks. Enhancing these working relationships will enable organisations to better address community needs in preparation for future challenges.

Peer-to-peer networks can exist at two levels: at the level of the bicultural workers who serve CALD communities and at the CALD community organisational level. Social media, in particular, is a powerful tool for connecting workers and communities. We observed numerous organisations leveraging simple devices (basic smartphones and laptops) and free or low-cost online services to encourage their workers and volunteers to carry out tasks from home, even if previously such tasks were limited to office workstations. In this sense, social media tools can be seen as an infrastructure that can be augmented and shaped to meet different organisational needs. Via the use of social media, community reach was enhanced during the pandemic and in the recovery phase. For example, some organisations hosted workshops online in which attendees could fully participate, even though they were located in regional Victoria, thus enabling the involvement of people who previously would not have been able to meaningfully participate in the organisation's programs. Some

organisations asked their bicultural workers to work closely with other organisations to learn from best practices elsewhere. At times, this involved the creation of informal WhatsApp groups between workers from different organisations, enabling them to share their learnings.

CASE STUDY EVIDENCE:

The Australian Karen Organisation (AKO)

AKO (Australian Karen Organisation - Victoria)

Running multilingual online events with young people

AKO is a community organisation that supports refugees and migrants from the Karen communities of Myanmar living in Australia. As part of the playbook development phase, we worked with AKO to develop and deliver a series of activities to support AKO volunteers to more effectively run and disseminate online events for their target networks. For example, AKO coordinates the Victoria Karen Communities Network Group (VKCNG), an association of smaller Karen organisations and community groups that deliver welfare programs and cultural events for the Karen community. Organisations like AKO run activities such as homework programs and sport programs for young Karen people. These programs run on an ad-hoc basis due to a lack of funding and material resources. However, in recognition of this constraint, individual organisations operate programs by opening them up to other organisations and community groups as well. As such, they work together closely in solidarity to address common social issues and ensure that the Karen community is inclusive. In addition to collaborating with organisations that serve Karen communities, AKO works strategically with peak bodies from other ethno-cultural groups in Myanmar to access funding. For example, AKO collaborated with the Chin Communities Council (who represent subgroups such as Falam Chin, Haka Chin, Zo Chin and Mizo).

It is evident that the significant complexity surrounding ethnic identity in Myanmar (Burma) has been transferred to the Burmese community in Australia. Our consultation with ethnic group leaders and youth leaders revealed that there has been an increase in anti-social behaviour among young Burmese youth across the different Burmese ethnic communities. To accommodate and respond to the differing needs of the Burmese ethnic groups it is targeting, AKO leveraged a range of online formats, including public events, invitation-only community events, and online workshops. These public events are cultural days that are of special significance to the community, such as Karen festivals, where the aim is to celebrate the Karen community while also building engagement with other Australian communities. On the other hand, invitation-only community events (such as Zoom webinars) are safe spaces for Karen members and participation is monitored to ensure that offensive or inappropriate anti-Karen sentiments are not expressed by attendees.

Working closely with AKO's bicultural workers and key volunteers, we designed online activities to equip their young people and mobilise them as volunteers by building their digital skills capacity, to serve as leaders at the cultural events run by AKO and other community organisations. As AKO is a networked organisation, its online training drew many young people from churches, monasteries and other organisations affiliated with AKO. The training, which consisted of Zoom workshops, WhatsApp-based activities and group mentoring, and in-person clinics held at AKO premises in the western suburbs,

delivered key skills in online events management and post-production. For example, participants gained skills in running online events, technical troubleshooting, packaging bite-sized content from online events for dissemination through social media, and using subtitling and voice-overs to increase the accessibility of Karenic-language media to the wider Australian audience.

CASE STUDY EVIDENCE:
Huddle and schools

As mentioned above, the Huddle is the community arm of North Melbourne Football Club and was established to empower young people in North Melbourne and the western suburbs of Melbourne, particularly young people from CALD communities. We worked with the Huddle to augment its Voice Your Voice (VyV) initiative, a youth storytelling advocacy project delivered in schools. VyV helps young people to articulate their passion for social change and to share their stories with a wider audience, which includes community leaders. The changes introduced to VyV through our partnership with the Huddle have enabled young people to articulate the social challenges faced by CALD communities during the COVID-19 crisis and to put forward the various calls to action that form part of their advocacy campaign. By designing processes that work within civic institutions like schools, young people from hardly reached backgrounds can also be supported in sharing their experiences.

Pathways forward

Drawing on local and state government understandings of organisational ecologies (see Strategic Opportunity 3), two routes can be taken to strengthen the collective capacities of organisations: continuing/building upon organisational collaboration; and building on or creating initiatives for CALD young people that focus on developing or strengthening collaborative media creation abilities at the organisational level. Creating opportunities for organisations to collaborate is an important next step, based on the recognition that organisations have varying capacities and can work with each other to fill skill and resource gaps. This can be particularly valuable for organisations that lack digital resources and/or knowledge but have the linkages to organisations that are digitally better resourced and skilled. Improving capacity across the sector in an equitable way in periods of quiescence will be beneficial for governments as they can then leverage these relationships when crises and challenges arise for CALD communities.

4.0
Actionable steps moving forward

The strategic opportunities presented above inform a number of actionable steps that can be taken by the state government and organisations that work with CALD young people. These steps focus on empowering young people, empowering the organisations that work with them, and creating a knowledge base of effective digital engagement strategies that can be used for both everyday issues and in times of crisis.

Empowering CALD young people

1. **Conduct a baseline study to better understand the existing digital literacies** and capabilities of CALD young people, to scope their literacies, platforms/modes of engagement and points of information consumption during times of crisis (formal and informal).

2. Discerning credible evidence during times of crisis is an important skill, not only for CALD young people, but for society more broadly. However, as many CALD young people are intergenerational, peer-to-peer and community messengers, there is an urgent need to increase the sharing of relevant and factual information during crises from this group. This can be achieved by **creating learning pathways for CALD young people, including hardly reached young people,** which involve training in digital engagement technologies where young people are explicitly taught to discern what information is trustworthy and accurate. This training could be developed and delivered by DFFH to CALD young people communicators, or DFFH could provide partnership and funding opportunities to CALD-focused organisations to develop and deliver participatory training programs with young people.

3. Create a plan to specifically **engage hardly reached CALD young people** with skill- and trust-building activities. This can be achieved by **elevating the practice of storytelling** among CALD young people as a means to facilitate the co-design of participatory government and community messaging and information sharing.

4. The suggested training activities with CALD young people will provide the government with an opportunity to identify a broader group of young leaders across a range of CALD communities who are trusted and reliable and who have demonstrated the potential and/or skills to communicate accurate and targeted messaging and information to their community, peers and families. Rather than relying solely on volunteers, we suggest that **new employment opportunities be created** for these young leaders to engage with their broader community on important issues that matter to them.

Empowering CALD organisations

5. **Co-design engagements** with youth workers from CALD community organisations so that digital and in-person processes are configured to align with the lived experiences and digital capacities of the young people they work with.

6. Implement **targeted training sessions** for emerging and established bicultural workers and community leaders to strengthen their digital communication and engagement skills, including during times of crisis. In these training sessions, bicultural workers and community leaders will learn about the importance of accessing reliable information and evaluating its accuracy.

7. **Build on or develop funding initiatives** that are specifically designed for organisations to collaborate on particular project or program development and implementation that are focused on digital technologies/engagements.

8. **Connect organisations together to build partnerships**, such as joining established organisations with newer or more informal/grassroots organisations to fill certain gaps related to skills, resources, reach and knowledge.

Creating a knowledge base for effective digital engagement practices

9. Conduct a **baseline study** of organisations that work with CALD young people to **map their ecologies**. Understanding how organisations work with each other and with various CALD communities will provide strategic insights into how funding, training and collaboration can be maximised to encourage engagement (digital and in-person) with the greatest possible number of end users. This will facilitate information sharing and engagement around everyday issues, while simultaneously building a foundation for the rapid uptake of digital engagements during times of crisis.

10. Re-engage with organisations that work with CALD communities to **identify the digital strategies they used that effectively enhanced networks, trust and the sharing of information** during the initial phases of the COVID-19 crisis and the recovery period. **Seek out information on the digital engagement strategies that did not achieve the intended objectives** to identify practices that are unlikely to work in response to future crises. Collectively this information will allow governments and non-government organisations to learn from the COVID-19 crisis and better prepare and develop engagement strategies for future crises and challenges.

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Appendix 1:
Methodology

1.1 Data collection roles and responsibilities

Data collection was largely conducted by the Monash Migration and Inclusion Centre and ActionLab teams. Oversight was provided by CI Wickes and detailed feedback on the key findings and analysis was provided by MMIC, BeahviorWorks Australia and Public Health and Preventative Medicine colleagues. Specific data collection roles and responsibilities are outlined below against each phase of the research project.

Phase 1

Charishma Ratnam and Delvin Varghese conducted the semi-structured interviews with CALD young people. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for analysis and averaged 60 minutes in duration. The LOTE Agency assisted with the recruitment of interviewees from the target groups identified by DFFH, many of whom were international students.

Phase 2

Charishma Ratnam and Delvin Varghese conducted the semi-structured interviews with 10 key organisations that work with CALD youth. Some of these organisations were identified by the MMIC team from their existing stakeholder network. Other organisations were recommended and contact was facilitated via DFFH. The MMIC team used semi-strucutured interview data from an additional 23 organisations from an independent project conducted at the outset of the COVID-19 crisis on the role of digital technology to facilitate and support inter-cultural engagement during the crisis. These 23 interviews were conducted by Rebecca Wickes, Charishma Ratnam and Rebecca Powell.

Phase 3

The Action Lab team (Delvin Varghese, Patrick Olivier and Tom Bartindale) carried out a Research through Design (RTD) approach to collaborating and designing a social media playbook across five partner organisations that work with different CALD youth communities in Victoria. These organisations were identified by the MMIC and Action Lab team to reflect the different types of community organisations that work towards social change.

Delvin Varghese worked with bicultural workers in each organisation to co-design an individually tailored community engagement activities that focussed around priority issues (e.g. access to education and employment opportunities) that emerged from the COVID-19 crisis. These activities leveraged the digital capabilities of young people that each organisation worked with, and used them to address core community challenges as surfaced by the organisations' ability to engage with young people in participatory ways in both virtual and in-person settings.

1.2 PHASE 1: Interviews with CALD young people

Interview questions – CALD Young People

1. Do you use any apps or social media platforms to keep in touch with your friends, family and wider community? If so, which ones do you use?

2. Do you use any of these apps to stay informed about world events? Which ones do you rely on the most?

3. What are your views on the current COVID-19 pandemic?

4. How did you form these views?

   a. Are these views shared by your family and friends?

5. Where would you go to obtain news information about COVID-19 – internet, social media, friends/ family? Why do you choose to trust those sources of news and information?

6. What COVID-19 information have you seen?

   a. What do you think about the information that is available about COVID-19?

7. How should important community health information be made available to the public? (e.g. social media, face-to-face etc.)

8. Was there any COVID-19 information that you wanted to find but couldn't access? Why?

9. What would you do if you thought you were at risk of COVID-19?

10. Are you worried that you are at risk of catching COVID 19 now? Do you think COVID-19 might still be in your community, or do you feel it is safe now?

11. What do you think about getting tested for COVID-19?

12. What would impact on your views of getting testing for COVID-19?

13. What did you think about the government restrictions that were implemented in Victoria?

    a. Do you think the restrictions were helpful to stop the spread of the virus?

    b. Do you think the restrictions targeted community members who might be at risk of contracting COVID-19?

14. What is your vision of a COVID-normal time? What does it look like to you?

15. In the event of further COVID-19 outbreaks, what do you think could be done to provide information to young people to help stop the spread of COVID-19?

    a. What other kinds of communication strategies would be useful to keep culturally and linguistically diverse communities informed of important events/issues?

16. Can you tell me about any instances where you have shared COVID-19 information? Who with (family, friends, etc) and how (verbal, via social media, messaging platforms, etc)?

    a. Why did you share that information?

17. If you share information related to restrictions/COVID info on social media platforms, are these generally visual or videos? Would it be helpful to have more visually shareable content e.g. in Instagram or TikTok over Facebook?

Additional questions

1. To help us understand whether the Victorian Government's COVID-19 communication could be more trauma-informed/sensitive, have any of the restrictions or methods of communication re-activated any past events that may have been stressful or traumatic?

2. Did you experience any challenges following the COVID-19 prevention rules? For example, maybe there were social pressures from friendship groups or even family? If so, what would be helpful to overcome these pressures?

3. Are you aware of people being discriminated because of COVID? If so, what could the Victorian Government do to support you and your community and prevent this from happening?

Phase 1 interviews code book

Aim of Phase 1: To identify how young people (aged 18-25) from CALD communities in Victoria, access, understand and act upon COVID-19 outbreak information.

Table 2: Code group 1: How do young people access health-related information?

Code name	Description
Cannot locate required information	Participant cannot locate information or appears unfamiliar with key rules or restriction levels.
Education provider as source of information	Where relevant, participant engages with information from an education provider (e.g., university, RTO) regarding health-related messaging.
Employer as source of information	Participants rely on or use their employer as a source of information.
Mainstream media as source of information	Participant mentions mainstream media as a source of information. Includes discussion on what media providers young people gravitate to, and the reasons for this.
Family as source of information	Participant relied on closed communication (e.g. SMS, phone, instant messaging, or face-to-face) with family to remain informed, or privileges information from family
Friends as source of information	Participant relied on closed communication (e.g. SMS, phone, instant messaging, or face-to-face) with friends to remain informed, or privileges information from friends
Official messaging on social media	Participants actively access official government messaging on social media.
Public or physical messaging	Participants have been informed by advertisements on public transport, roads, or other public signage.
Social media preferences	Participants mention a particular preference of social media service (e.g., YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.) for accessing information.
Actively resisted locating information	Participant developed strategies to actively avoid information regarding COVID-19.

Table 3: Code group 2: What are young people's attitudes towards the health-related information they see?

Code name	Description
Awareness of current rules	Participant is familiar with the present level of rules/restrictions and the various changes over the past few months.
Attitudes towards testing	Participant expresses views towards testing, either through first-hand experience or word-of-mouth
Judgement of others for non-compliance or need for greater restrictions	Participant expresses judgement of others for perceived non-compliance of preventative measures.
Language barriers	Participant expresses language is a barrier to understanding the health-related information they obtain or see.
Medium preferences (text, image, video, apps, etc.)	Participant expresses preference for particular information medium (e.g., text, images, video)
Mistrust or scepticism towards unofficial sources	Participant expresses mistrust, wariness, or scepticism towards unofficial sources, or an attitude that online information varies in quality.
Confusion or mixed messages	Participant expresses a sense of confusion regarding the official information they have access to.
Social responsibility to act	Participant expresses feelings of social responsibility towards compliance with preventative health measures.
Trust in government related sources	Participant expresses feelings of trust in official government sources (e.g., press conferences/ appearances, press releases, DHHS social media or website)
Feels virus response has been adequate	Participant expresses agreement with public health measures.
Discrimination	Participant feels a target of discriminatory measures or that there are 'different rules for different people'.
Open to unorthodox views	Participant is open to views that circulate online that may be considered questionable, inflated, or a conspiracy, as well as 'orthodox' health information.
Trust in any information shared online	Participant expresses views that they trust any information available online.

Table 4: Code group 3: How do young people act upon health-related information?

Code name	Description
Engagement with information	Participant engages with information in some way (e.g., by commenting, 'liking', sharing, etc.).
'Broker' of information for others	Participant is responsible for sharing health-related information with others in their family or community.
Compliance with preventive measures	Participant acts by complying with preventative measures (masks, testing, sanitising, distancing).
Non-compliance with preventive measures	Participant, for whatever reason, does not comply with preventative measures.
Messaging unclear or unsure what to do	Participant does not understand, doesn't know how to act, or finds the information overwhelming or incomprehensible.
Ambivalent about restrictions	Participant has mixed feelings towards the health-related restrictions.

Table 5: Code group 4: What are the living circumstances of young CALD people that may protect or expose them to risk?

Code name	Description
Education as social participation	Participant finds social networks through education (e.g., university or RTO contacts) important to support or information seeking.
Employment - multiple jobs	Participant has multiple modes of employment.
Employment - precarious or informal	Participant engages in precarious or informal labour markets (e.g., working as a contractor via apps).
Employment – loss due to COVID	Participant has recently lost employment due to and/or during COVID-19 pandemic.
Government support – ineligible or insufficient	Participant is unable to access government support or finds present levels of government support insufficient to make ends meet.
Housing situation - sharing	Participant lives in shared accommodation (does not include family members).
Migration status	Participant is in Australia as an international student, working holiday maker, skilled visa holder, or other short-term visa.
Religious beliefs or institutions	Participant actively participates in religious services, or finds connection to religion a key source of connection and information.
Social disconnection or isolation	Participant is disconnected or isolated from others.

1.3 PHASE 2: Interviews with key stakeholder

Interview questions – CALD Youth Organisations

Organisation details and activities:

1. Can you tell me your position at the organisation and a little bit about the work you do in your role?

2. What kind of structure does the organisation have and where do you fit within that?

3. Has your role changed much since the pandemic?

4. Did your work with young people change since COVID-19 hit?

5. What are the key programs or services you have adopted/adapted since COVID-19?

6. How have your programs or services changed now that we are in more of a COVID-normal phase of the pandemic?

7. Broadly, what kind of work does the organisation engage in as core business?

8. What communities do you work in/with?

9. Do you work with CALD young people and if so, which groups and what particular programs do you have for these groups?

Communication/information sharing during COVID:

10. How did your organisation develop and disseminate COVID-19 information?

11. What kinds of communications campaigns on prevention and community restrictions did you come up with, if any?

12. Did you have to tailor your communications to target CALD young people?

13. How did the young people respond to this communication and information sharing?

14. What did you think of the ways that young people responded to the organisation's communications?

15. Generally, do you feel the sharing of COVID-19 information to CALD young people has been successful? Why/Why not?

16. What have been some of the strengths of your COVID-19 communications and prevention work that target young people?

17. Do you think this work could be improved? If so, how?

18. Is this work underpinned by strategies and/or policy? Is it sustainable?

19. Have you come across any innovative initiatives happening in the broader communities you work with in terms of engaging young people or around the sharing of COVID-19 information?

Social media/technology use during COVID:

20. Since the pandemic, how have you been using technology and social media to continue connections with CALD young people?

21. What other strategies are you employing to connect with CALD young people in harder to reach communities, including those with low levels of English proficiency, those in regional or remote communities, those with limited digital access and skill?

22. What are the key barriers you are facing in connecting with CALD young people?

23. Is your organisation engaging any professional development activities to better connect with CALD young people around COVID-19 communication and information sharing?

24. What do you think will be the biggest challenges for CALD young people in the community in a post-COVID world?

25. How has your organisation used or engaged with COVID-19 prevention communication and information from the Victorian Government? [ASKED EARLIER?]

26. How have you/your organisation perceived the information and communication shared from the Victorian Government around COVID-19 prevention and do you feel it has been successful?

Phase 2 interviews code book

Table 6: Code group 1: What elements are required for communication strategies/engagement with youth to be successful?

Code name	Description
Leadership	Building/leveraging capability/capacity among young people to support a larger cohort, supporting young people to act as a positive force within their community.
Trust	'Bearers of messages' need to be trusted by young people (whether women, community leaders, role models).
Representation	Young people need to 'see themselves' represented in order to engage. Participants may also be critical of programs that are delivered by those unconnected to the cultural community.
Meeting young people 'on their level'	Need to ensure messages are delivered in a way that resonate with young people.
Reciprocal engagement	Strategy actively avoids 'one-way' communication, by offering end users meaningful ways to engage, and interact with organisations.
Fostering bridging ties	Communication strategy is designed to foster connections among stakeholders, providing opportunities for community groups to form bridging ties with each other.
Collaboration	Fostering and leveraging collaboration from across the community sector and public sector (e.g. schools) to ensure successful engagement.
Sustainability	Strategies developed to ensure effects are sustained and go beyond the individuals involved with the organisation directly.

Table 7: Code group 2: What are the barriers/challenges key organisations face in engaging with young people?

Code name	Description
Digital divide	Inadequate level of internet connectivity, access to devices, or digital literacy a barrier to engagement with young people.
Bureaucratic language	Information inaccessible to young people.
Bureaucracy	Key organisations blocked from accessing young people during a crisis by the state government (e.g. Social Services, Police).
Funding challenges	Unstable funding environment affects viability of support and ongoing engagement with young people (also see: lack of capacity).
Loss of 'social infrastructure'	Removal/inability to access schools, public libraries, are key issues that affect engagement.
Lack of capacity	Inadequate skills or resources to adapt/synchronise strategies across online/offline at an organisational level.

Table 8: Code group 3: What are the key issues organisations are responding to?

Code name	Description
Material conditions	Poverty/income inequality, inappropriate housing key issues that organisations must overcome (Also see: digital divide.)
Maintaining existing ties	Strategies were designed to sustain connections among end users during a time of limited interaction.
Disengagement	Strategies responding to disengagement from education, employment, other social ties. (also see: Maintaining existing ties).
Precarious labour markets	Target groups concentrated in precarious (casual, gig economy) employment.
Drugs and alcohol issues	Target groups responding to drug and alcohol use and engagement with the criminal justice system.
Racism	Experiences of racism and racialised disadvantage.
Mental health	Mental health is a key issue that organisations are working to support.
Inability to access government support	Young people from a background (e.g. children of temporary visa holders, international students) that mean they are unable to access some government support and services.
Distrust of authority	Responding to a deficit of trust in the state or mainstream society.

Table 9: Code group 4: What has changed about the organisation's role during a crisis situation?

Code name	Description
Visibility	COVID-19 heighted the visibility of the work the organisation had been doing for a long time.
Increased engagement	Need for services, and level of engagement has increased, or is likely to increase, during crisis situations.

1.4 PHASE 3: Co-developing digital playbooks

The Action Lab team followed an Action Research approach to working with our collaborating organisations as partners to design a playbook to enable them in engaging their young people. Due to the unique configuration of each organisation and their particular relationships with young people, the team worked closely with them for the duration of Phase 3, holding 2-4 meetings every month.

Throughout the engagements with different organisations, the Action Lab team also engaged Dr. Daniel Lambton-Howard, a UK-based expert in using digital technologies with young people for community engagements. Dr. Lambton-Howard was engaged as a critical friend, who provided valuable insights around shaping the conceptual framework for social media playbooks, extracting key principles of digital engagement that cut across different CALD groups and community organisations.

More details on our engagement with each organisation is given below:

Table 10: Organisations (Design Phase)

	Name	Type of Organisation	'Play' developed
1	**Center for Multicultural Youth (CMY)**	A *multipurpose* organisation that serves as a capacity for other CALD community organisations and also works directly at the community level.	A collaborative video-based storytelling play to help Maori-Pasifika community members to be capacitated in video skills.
2	**YLab**	YLab are an *enabling* organisation that trains youth associates from CALD communities and help them in working with different levels of civil society in promoting social change.	A professional development play; training YLab associates in a new collaborative and accessible model of doing podcasts that help them engage their CALD youth peers and create a new avenue for disseminating social change messaging.
3	**Migrante**	A community organisation dedicated to providing welfare for and raising awareness about Filipino-Australian community and international students.	A social awareness play; enabling Migrante youth volunteers (from a Filipino-Australian background) to organise and carry out a social media campaign to raise awareness about the challenges faced during lockdown by Filipino international students and temporary migrants.
4	**Australian Karen Organisation (AKO)**	A *community network* organisation dedicated to the Karenic community (migrants, refugees and asylum seekers from Karen State, Myanmar). Also helps lead network of Karen orgs.	A multicultural events play; training AKO youth volunteers to run impactful online events for the Karen community (and thus serve as extra capacity to the Karen community organisers) and to utilise online event recordings in novel ways to kickstart conversations with the wider Australian community by training them in video-editing skills.
5	**The Huddle**	The community arm of the North Melbourne Football Club (NMFC). Strong relationships with schools and cultural institutions in North and West Melbourne where they serve CALD community youth.	Augmenting their existing program: Voice your Voice, an initiative designed to help young people grow their ideas and turn them into projects. Previously, only a select few ideas could be turned into short films. We embraced a 'participatory film-making' approach to design a play for young people to work collaboratively and ideate, capture and produce their own group films.

In-depth exploration: CMY (Le Mana)

CMY's Le Mana program, works with young people from Maori-Pasifika communities. The Le Mana leadership wanted to empower the young people in the community to take on a more proactive role in the organisation's various activities (e.g. awareness raising, cultural events and community consultations). Le Mana has successfully leveraged the involvement of these young people previously to generate video stories that highlight community challenges.

The aim of this collaboration was to create a set of digital activities for Le Mana leadership to be able to *facilitate* their young people in creating, editing and producing short videos that encourage participation from the wider community in community service projects (e.g. food banks, cultural centres). A key emphasis of this project was on creating sustainable and low-cost processes for facilitating digital activities by young people. In line with the playbooks approach, mobile phones and social media platforms (to improve accessibility to a wide variety of young people).

Key Activities

1. **Requirements gathering:** Identify training needs for Maori-Pasifika youth and understand their existing media literacy (e.g. do they already use video platforms such as YouTube, TikTok to produce video narratives? what are their current digital skill literacies?). Over multiple meetings and exploration of past approaches, the Action Lab team surfaced some of the core community principles that are important for storytelling and participation within Maori-Pasifika community cultures.

2. **Training:** Based on Step 1, Delvin Varhgese then worked together with Le Mana bicultural workers to create a training program that considered their existing digital literacies and preferences around video. The participants of the Le Mana program and members of the Maori-Pasifika community who had expressed interest in taking part in this initiative also joined. The workshops were run through a hybrid model: regular check-ins and catchup sessions were organised on Zoom so that many of the participants who had family commitments could join in the evening from their own homes. On Saturdays, skill clinics and ideation sessions were held to enable participants to brush up on their digital skills: best practices for capturing video, editing skills (many of the participants had only carried out single-shot videos and wanted to learn more about how to mix together different video clips in an easy manner. We chose to use ClipChamp, a low-cost online platform that allows non-expert filmmakers to edit and publish their videos.

3. **Video Creation:** Participants then worked together in small groups and were facilitated by Monash and Le Mana team using in-person facilitation methods and social media platforms that they already use (e.g. Facebook groups and Messenger). The social media platforms help coordinate weekly tasks and video creation activities that participants were able to do in their own time (e.g. taking shots of specific locations or capture a certain voice-over that would go into the final film).

4. **Production:** Based on Le Mana team's motivations for utilising a collaborative approach to creating youth-led videos, free or low-cost online tools (e.g. ClipChamp) were used which were affordable for community organisations that work with Maori-Pasifika youth. As part of this stage, accessible tips from the video industry were also provided on how to find freely available stock footage and audio samples and guidance on how to edit videos together.

5. **Advocacy:** In addition (and restrictions permitting) some in-person events were also organised. For instance, a cultural evening is being planned for early June where Le Mana team would invite local community leaders and relevant stakeholders (youth workers from local council, Maori-Pasifika organisations) to engage in conversations around the topics raised in the films by the participants.

Timeline of events

Feb-March -> Planning meetings between Monash and CMY Le Mana leaders.

March 30 -> Orientation meeting organised with participants from the CALD community

March 31-April 2 -> Offline activity: Shoot and bring a video to workshop

April 3, 10, 17, 24 -> In-person training and shooting days for young people

April 10-17 -> Week 3: Ideation and Storyboarding

April 18-25 -> Week 4: Reviewing footage and editorial decisions

April 26-May 14 -> Week 5&6: Finalising videos and creating promotional strategy.

June 5 -> Film screening and Cultural event

June 6-11 -> Week 7: Evaluation & Lessons Learnt
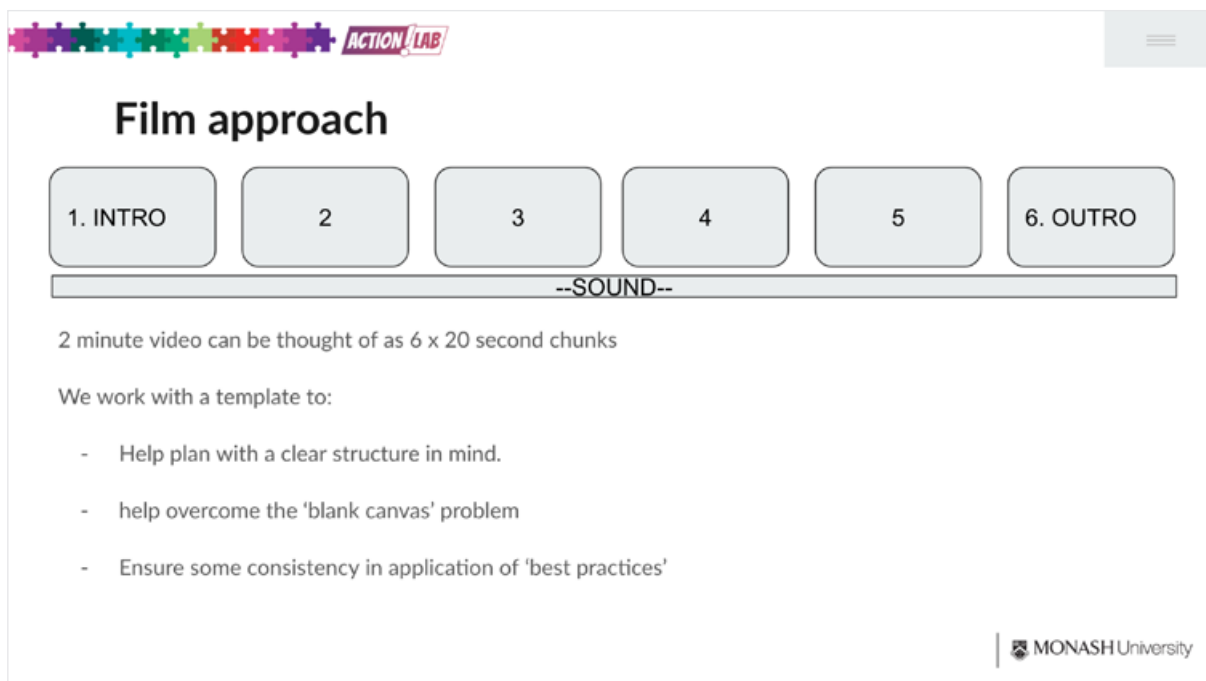
Materials

Figure 3: Video playbook template, La Mana

An example template that was created to help participants of the Le Mana program to easily visualise their video structure by shooting elements for different chunks.
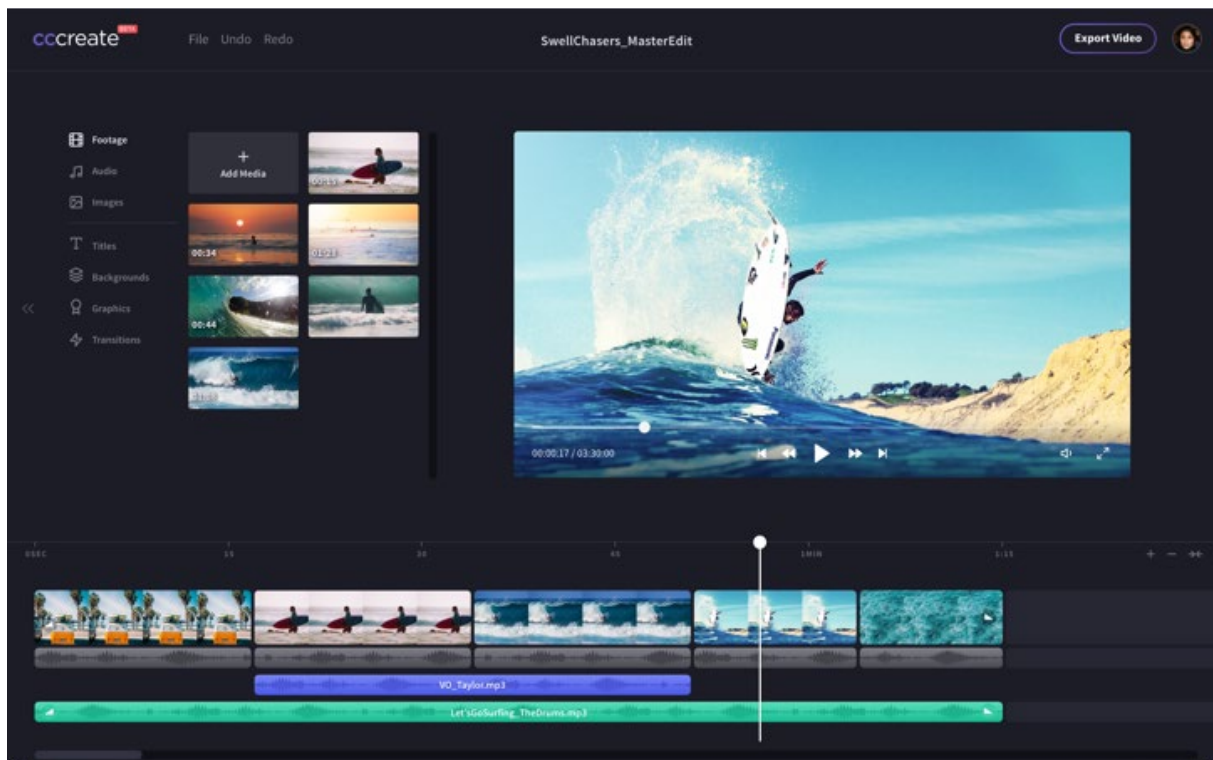

Figure 4: Clipchamp

Clipchamp is an easy to use and versatile video editor. Monash team used this with both CMY and Huddle video-based activities. Source: *clipchamp.com*

1.5 Challenges and limitations of data collection

Due to the short term nature of the research project, the LOTE Agency was engaged to recruit CALD young people for Phase 1 interviews from the target groups identified by DFFH. Interviewee recruitment was therefore rapid and as a result, a large proportion of interviewees were international students. Consequently, a more diverse cohort of CALD youth, including from other temporary visa categories, permanent residents and first and second generation Australians are not widely represented in this interview sample. Further, hardly reached CALD young people were not a part of this data collection and are therefore not included in this research project.

The snap, five day lockdown in Victoria in February 2021 slowed down the recruitment of participants from organisations for the interviews in Phase 2. Consequently, we were unable to engage with some organisations that the research team and the DPC team had identified originally. However, we were still able to complete the 10 interviews for this phase with organisations who worked with, or serviced, CALD young people.

Collaborating with organisations that were already stretched after the COVID-19 pandemic meant the time that they could devote to playbooks development was limited. Recognising their resource constraints, we took a more leading role in working with their volunteers and running training events.

Appendix 2:
Phase 1 Findings

As part of Phase 1 of the project, the research team conducted 30 in-depth interviews with CALD young people. The aim of these interviews was to 'identify how young people (aged 18-25) from CALD communities in Victoria access, understand, and act upon COVID-19 outbreak information'.

Five target groups were identified to interview, with six individuals from the each of the following cultural groups:

- Nepalese
- Colombian
- Indian
- Sudanese (Arabic speakers)
- Lebanese
- Iraqi[1]

The research team conducted 30 interviews with the following groups:

- Nepalese (n=6)
- Colombian (n=6)
- Indian (n=6)
- Sudanese (Arabic speakers) (n=6)
- Lebanese (n=1)
- Iraqi (n=5)

Participants were recruited by the LOTE Agency. The research team conducted interviews via Zoom and phone calls. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis. Interpreters were provided by LOTE for five of the interviews.

This report presents an update on the key themes that have emerged from the interviews conducted. Due to the small sample size, these views are not representative of the broader cultural community or group, however, they do reflect some common experiences of information seeking and use among young CALD people during the pandemic.

The main variation in participant responses related to migration status, rather than cultural background. The reason for this is the impact migration status has on access to material resources, and the breadth and depth of social ties in Australia. Temporary visa holders were more likely to experience financial insecurity and precarious employment and less likely to be an active part of a broader cultural community (including involvement with community organisations). This impacts on information seeking and support networks,

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1   Originally Lebanese participants were sought, but due to difficulties with recruitment, Iraqi participants were recruited as a sixth cultural group for inclusion in the project, as per advice from DPC.

with a reliance among recent migrants on social media, the Web, employers, and education providers, and less on family, cultural and faith-based groups, and community organisations.

How do CALD young people access health-related information?

The findings suggest CALD young people access public health-related information from mainstream media, family and friends, Victorian government social media and websites, in addition to a range of social media. A wide range of social media and instant messaging services were used for creating, accessing, and engaging with information, particularly Facebook, Messenger, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp. TikTok, Yubo, WeChat, Snapchat were also mentioned. Overwhelmingly, however, participants used search (particularly Google) to locate health-related information and tended to gravitate toward official messaging, including government websites and the World Health Organization:

I used to visit the government website every so often, like, every… two [to] three days. (P2, Indian)

If you follow a government page [on social media] you know that whatever has been said is going to be credible information. (P5, Colombian)

That's the World Health Organization I have been consulting, and Google showed that one [as] the first thing always when you [search] for… COVID. So, I'm constantly [accessing] that one, and… if I had to go particularly for the Australian advice I was going [to] the DHHS site. (P6, Nepalese)

Different communication technologies were used for different purposes. For example, microblogging (Twitter) was a source of information, however, participants were less likely to contribute content or engage (like, share, comment, etc.) with information using this service. Instant messaging services (WhatsApp, Viber) were used for communicating in a more engaged way with specific audiences, ranging from a larger cultural group to smaller social units (friends, and particularly family).

For my friends, it's mostly Facebook and Instagram… [but] with my parents it's obviously WhatsApp… and then a little bit with Facebook as well, because the older community [are] not as much on Instagram as much as they are on… Facebook. (P2, Indian)

I used Facebook [on which] I usually follow the news channels… [and] Viber, WhatsApp in order to get connected with my [fellow Nepalese] people… almost all of us international students were in [the same] Facebook group or WhatsApp group… and if something new comes up regarding the COVID, some of the group members will post that in the group so that we could be aware of what's happening…
(P11, Nepalese)

In regard to measures to curb the spread of COVID-19, participants noted that information (particularly when measures were changing rapidly) could be overwhelming, with some confusion and mixed messaging. In these cases, participants relied on quasi-official sources such as education providers (schools, universities) and employers for up-to-date information.

We didn't know about where to do the COVID test because we had never done it before… at first, I rang my workplace… and they were the ones who just guided me through the thing so they asked me to do a COVID test and they asked me to search on a website where the COVID test… can be done… My workplace helped me a lot [in] that case. (P18, Nepalese)

[The] university used to… give us weekly updates about COVID or the roadmaps or anything which the government used to change, even the slightest thing, our university used to… email us all the [relevant] instructions… All the universities have been doing their best to make sure that the proper information reaches to international… students, because they don't have any family over here. (P2, Indian)

Very few could not locate the information they felt they required to comply with public health measures and feel safe and connected to social networks.

What are young people's attitudes towards the health-related information they see?

Participants had strong views regarding the differential quality of information depending on its source. The majority of participants conveyed some feelings of scepticism or mistrust towards unofficial sources (i.e., from unknown individuals or groups rather than trusted organisations or governments). Several mentioned cognitive processes ('fact checking', recognising 'bias' or 'exaggerated' claims) that allowed them to recognise, categorise, and interpret various forms of health-related information. While this is a promising finding, it also shows the extent of widespread misinformation on social media and the Web, and the need for strong public digital and information literacy programs to ensure young people are adequately informed on the differential quality of information:

> The rumours are all over the place that [COVID-19] can be cured with dirt, it can be cured with… turmeric water, turmeric milk… and whatnot, all baseless. So, I had to give a lot of people a [fact] check. (P4, Indian)

> [On] Facebook, you know, [only] some sources can be trusted. So, you have to… double check them. (P2, Indian)

> I would say I felt more anxious when it came to… false information. Just because… in the Sudanese community and stuff, a lot of people highly rely on… WhatsApp. And, for me, I don't really trust the information that comes from WhatsApp. (P27, Sudanese)

> I would always be researching about the virus. [It's] sort of my personality [to want to] get to the bottom of things. I mean some of my friends… would… dabble in conspiracy theories and whatnot… [however] I would read articles. Listen to podcasts… [to make up my own mind]. (P30, Sudanese)

One particular finding is worth mentioning: Several participants felt their confidence in government was harmed during July's sudden lockdown of nine public housing towers in Melbourne. Participants spoke of racist and classist representations of migrant and refugee communities represented in mainstream media, which was deeply hurtful. These representations did significant damage to public trust among several participants. These participants were concentrated in the Iraqi and Sudanese cohorts.

> Going back to the [public housing] towers… I think the whole situation… was… discrimination because right across [from] the public housing towers, there's… a building of… resident people living in there but it's private and they had no restrictions at all… I think about the towers a lot. It had a big impact… I think that was one of the biggest things… that really affected me and my community. (P10, Sudanese)

> I feel like.. when the flats were locked down. I felt like that was pretty discriminatory. Because the flats across [from] them weren't locked down… and it's like, is that because it's a government building? And there's immigrants in there? Is that why they don't get the same privilege? (P16, Sudanese)

How do young people act upon health-related information?

Several participants felt a sense of social responsibility to act, and a strong sense of connection to the broader community. Several mentioned that although they were personally at low risk of complications related to COVID-19, they felt responsibility to parents, grandparents (their own, or speaking generally), and the wider Victorian community. A notable finding is that this sense of civic responsibility and pride extends to non-citizens, including temporary visa holders. For these participants, the experience of going through restrictions with others in Melbourne fostered a sense of connection, even pride, despite their lack of formal citizenship.

… it's a matter of life and death when it comes to corona. I know that a lot of people my age, like, the mortality rate is not high but [...] I just feel like just to protect the elderly and people that are vulnerable. (P12, Sudanese)

Everyone was itching to get out, but at the same time we were very concerned with what we'd done and how we went about it. So, we can take, precautions for our children and our elders as well obviously. As you'd know some of our elders copped it in our community, in the Western suburbs. (P7, Lebanese)

Several participants, particularly those with parents with limited English language, acted as 'brokers' of information for their family, relaying official messaging in language, in a way that was tailored to their needs. These participants were concentrated in the Iraqi and Sudanese cohorts. It is important to note that this is not just regarding language; the amount and format of information, and the level of complexity, are also important factors that need to be considered when providing information in a range of languages.

We had to take that on, obviously, as educated people in our community… and explain it to our parents and… the younger children… especially the ones that can't speak English properly… what's happening. And then listening to Daniel Andrews day by day was… a bit tiring as well for them, because they couldn't understand anything. So, we had to pretty much be the… news breakers to the whole family and community. (P7, Lebanese)

Yeah, you can get [health information] in other languages… [however, you have to have] a certain level of health literacy. A level of understanding… Because they can read it, but, that doesn't mean they can actually understand it. (P10, Sudanese)

Despite some ambivalence regarding the public health measures introduced by the state government, participants largely thought them necessary and fair (particularly given the timing of the interviews, as restrictions have been eased). There was some judgement of others who were perceived to have disobeyed measures, although this was a minority (n=9). This suggests that current formal information provision is landing well with CALD young people, who both trust and feel a sense of responsibility to adhere to official messaging. This trust and level of responsibility, however, is deeply contingent on participants' access to material resources (financial and employment security) and the breadth and depth of their social network around them (including friends and family) that itself relies on specific institutions (schools, universities, employers, religious institutions).

It is important to note that COVID testing was an issue where ambivalence was registered among participants. Participants were fearful of claims that testing was painful or uncomfortable, to a level where they would actively avoid getting tested. This is despite a generally strong level of compliance with health measures and a feeling of social responsibility. A recommendation may include diverse representations from the community speaking about their experience of getting tested to allay fear and uncertainty.

I don't think I could do [the COVID test], to be honest… It seems really extreme… There's a lot of negative connotation around it, and that's what you see on social media—a lot of complaints. But if we had people coming out saying… 'it's like uncomfortable a bit, but it's really not that bad'… I think it will ease a lot of people's conscience. (P15, Sudanese)

The COVID test actually seemed really scary… and the way that people talk about it, it hasn't been positive… So it scares a lot of people off, and has grossed me out in a way too. (P16, Sudanese)

What are the living circumstances of young CALD people that may protect or expose them to risk?

As mentioned, the main variation in participant responses related to migration status, rather than cultural background. The reason for this is the impact it has on:

a. material resources (including access to secure employment and financial support from government); and

b. the breadth and depth of social ties in Australia.

Temporary visa holders (e.g. international students, working holiday visa holders) were more likely to experience financial insecurity and precarious employment and less likely to be actively part of a broader cultural community, including involvement with community organisations. This finding was particularly evident when interviewers asked participants how information could be more effectively shared with migrant and ethnic minority communities. Participants on temporary visas took the question as an opportunity to reflect on the needs of groups *to which they did not belong* and had *no sense of enduring connection*. These participants were concentrated in the Nepalese, Colombian, and Indian cohorts. As such, information and support delivered through cultural groups may be less effective for these groups, who may rely more on social media, the Web, employers, and education providers, and less on family, cultural and faith-based groups, and community organisations:

> *At the beginning of the outbreak, we couldn't find any information about what the government was doing for international students or migrants.* (P4, Indian)

> *Temporary residents like us, we are very vulnerable. We don't know nothing... Every[one] was appealing for some[one] to do something for international students but even the Prime Minister here said if you can't afford it then go back home despite... the border closure... So it was very, very bad for us...* (P6, Nepal)

Additionally, participants on temporary visas were far more likely to hold multiple jobs, be engaged in precarious or informal labour markets, and be ineligible for federal government support (namely JobSeeker and JobKeeper). Employment included freelancing/independent contracting using various applications (AirTasker, Fiverr, Uber), and working in aged care and cleaning services. During the most severe restrictions, these participants were the most likely to experience loss of employment and ongoing financial insecurity, which was the cause of notable mental health concerns. Several participants had to rely on state government grants and charity organisations in order to meet basic living needs. The situation is complex, however. Many of these participants would consider themselves 'middle-class' in their home country, and their experience in Australia may be the first time they experienced any kind of social and financial independence. These participants generally have weaker social networks in Australia, and less of a sense of obligation or commitment to an employer, or local community group.

> *What happens [is] we get different... shifts at different locations. So, we do a stocktake for multiple brands... maybe clothing or a supermarket like Coles, and every shift is different. [Y]ou don't have any particular location or any particular time... that is fixed for your job.* (P2, Indian)

> *As [the pandemic] got worse in Melbourne especially, then everything just [went] really off track at [that] moment. So... at that moment, I joined an application called AirTasker. I was not really... considering... that before, when I was employed in a company. But yeah. So, I joined [AirTasker], and just like figured out how to be in jobs or whatever, how to get them done.* (P14, Indian)

Participants who had grown up in Australia, or who had migrated when they were children, were more likely to participate in a more meaningful way in cultural groups and felt a sense of connection to their cultural community. These participants were concentrated in the Sudanese and Lebanese cohorts and were less likely to have multiple modes of employment and generally have more stable and stronger social networks. For these participants, information provision through community organisations is more likely to be effective, as they feel a sense of obligation and commitment to their cultural community.

Appendix 3:
Phase 2 Findings

As part of Phase 2 of the project, the research team conducted 10 in-depth interviews with key stakeholders currently working with CALD young people in Victoria. Through these interviews, the research team examined how these organisations delivered information to, and communicated with, their end users before and during COVID-19.

The aim of this phase of the project was to better understand each organisation's communication strategies, challenges, and methods of disseminating health messages to end users, including CALD groups with low English and digital literacy levels. This information informed the development of a suite of digital engagement strategies for Phase 3 of the project.

The research team conducted interviews via Zoom and phone call. Interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes and were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Herein, we present an update on the key themes that emerged from the interviews. The focus is on the key challenges that organisations face in engaging with youth during COVID-19, and the strategies developed to sustain engagement.

The importance of youth-focused and youth-led approaches for successful engagement

Several elements were identified as critical to ensure communication strategies engaged CALD youth. These included the need for CALD young people to be included in the delivery of programs, and for information to be tailored to specific cultural groups. This finding is consistent among each organisation interviewed for Phase 2. As staff from Participant 6 noted, 'it wasn't just communicating a particular message, but actually being able to communicate it in a way where they actually related to it'. Both Participant 4 and Participant 5 highlighted the importance of youth-focused approaches to delivering information:

> *When [young people] hear the news, [they're] like, 'Ah, it's so boring, old people stuff... I don't care about it'... That's the type of attitude... the youth usually have... So knowing that, it's really important to tailor the information in a way that includes them as well... You have to really make it specific.* (Participant 5)

> *At CMY [we] try and be conscious of... how do we make [content with] user-friendly language [so] it's not so cumbersome that young people just disengage because it doesn't speak to them at all.* (Participant 4)

There is also value in communication strategies that are led *by* youth *for* youth. Participant 4, for example, had devised strategies that developed the capability of young people to feel empowered to be well informed on a topic, share their experience, and develop ways to support others:

> *I think where young people are able to work in partnership with an organisation where they can sort of say... "We're not going to talk about mental health in this way... we're going to talk about it in this*

way," and I think that really differs with different groups of young people at different ages, in different parts of Melbourne... from different cultural communities... and that... grassroots, nuanced... work is much more impactful than... a bigger ... widespread approach. That isn't often easier and cheaper [but] working with communities on the ground in their areas is... much more effective. (Participant 4)

My deep belief is as young people will listen if it comes from other young people or it's... people who look ... and sound like them. I think the more... we can build the capacity of young people to share those messages... the more effective they're going to be. (Participant 4)

It was also the case that youth had to 'see' themselves in information delivered in order to engage. Having adequate representation among CALD youth, and facilitators who had lived experience of challenges that the youth could relate to increased trust in, and engagement, with the information being delivered. Representatives from YLab and The Huddle both noted the importance of adequate representation and the need to avoid tokenistic guests of inclusion. Successful engagement was attributed, in part, to having staff who were representative of their end users:

I mean just making sure that the young people that you are engaging... just making sure that the people that are running that workshop or... facilitating that project are in fact... the young people from that community. So they're not just like the token young... Indigenous person in the room or the token Asian kid in the room. And the fact that we make sure that this space... – whether virtual or not... – that they're able to feel safe within this space. So we will make sure that we touch base with them before, if there's any accessibility issues that they have or any topics... that they don't want discussed, we'll just make sure that is disclosed to us beforehand, and just having facilitators that are trained to engage with... young people from diverse backgrounds. (Participant 1)

How does The Huddle... [reach] and engage [with] different groups? It's because of the diversity of our staff... If we can unlock the potential of young people having meaningful employment opportunities through work like ours, that's going to be a big part of the special sauce, if you like, to be able to grow our work and deepen our levels of engagement to help young people belong. (Participant 3)

These organisations were also developing strategies to include health-related messages in formats and avenues where COVID-19 was not the sole topic or focus. Strategies included events and programs that focused on broader topics such as mental health, relationships, family life, art, and sport. Again, strong examples came from Participant 3 and Participant 1.

Key barriers to engagement: mistrust, marginalisation, and disadvantage

CALD communities who are overrepresented in the youth justice system, marginalised and disadvantaged groups require approaches that are cognizant of their wariness and suspicion of authority, law enforcement and public institutions more broadly. Being aware of this, organisations developed strategies to

I think just engaging vulnerable communities, who distrust institutions and have bad experiences with – just say – Victoria Police, and we have to engage them for a consultation or a workshop, is – is very difficult, whether you're doing that online or not, um, it's hard. (Participant 1)

Stakeholders would rely on trust developed over a long period to deliver information in a way that aligned with the needs of specific young people that were disengaged or vulnerable. For YSAS, this was often having a staff member with a strong relationship with their clients, and an ability to tailor individualised information to end users:

I also tried, without sound like I'm... trying to control... but also tried to... disseminate information, as it happened... that's particular to that young person. (Participant 6)

Significant barriers to engagement stem from a lack of material resources. Inadequate internet connection, shared devices, and a lack of access to appropriate technology impacts the ability of organisations to use technology to engage with young people. Respondents felt that mainstream services and content were delivered for those with the literacy, time, and means to engage with them. As our respondents from the Participant 4 noted:

> *A lot of people, regardless of what sector they come from, have basically been forced to shift to online delivery, and online communication and connections and networks. For some young people that we work with it's worked… it's been great. For a lot of young people [however] it's not so great, especially those who are… quite disadvantaged to start with… We're talking about… the digital divide… between the have and have nots in terms of… [the] equipment needed to engage digitally. But also not just equipment [and] hardware, but also [the] ability to connect up to Wi-Fi.* (Participant 4)

The role of technology in engaging CALD youth

Recognising that there were limited avenues for engaging with their end users during COVID-19 lockdowns, and that accurate information was both vital and rapidly changing, several organisations deployed technology to continue to engage with their end users in a targeted way. Participant 4 gave the example of a podcast that included conversations with young people about issues that were affecting them:

> *It's not just the English language, it's also translating the language into… everyday parlance and helping families to make sense of [it]. The way we use language is so bureaucratic [that] it loses its meaning to community. So [a CMY staff member] set up [a] podcast to get the message out and to… talk to other young people so that they can have those conversations with the families in everyday English, not just… what comes up from the news and fact sheets that the government needs to send out, which is good, but you almost need a translator for that kind of English to everyday kind of English.* (Participant 4)

Online events developed in light of the COVID pandemic also allowed young people to connect with a broader network of CALD young people for the first time. This is particularly true for organisations whose work is concentrated in metropolitan Melbourne. Online events allowed these organisations to engage with regional/rural users who had been missed in previous efforts. However, this was contingent on the user group of organisation, and several organisations stressed the importance of enduring relationships based on trust and adequate representation. Nonetheless, Participant 4and Participant 1both provided examples of technology facilitating access for new user groups:

> *We're definitely looking forward to getting back to face-to-face and we definitely be doing more on that, but to be honest, online worked really well… We had really high participation and attendance rates with online [events]. We actually met more often with young people… in a program we'd normally met monthly, we were meeting weekly… We just wanted to check in and make sure that they were all going okay because it was pretty uncertain times… they wanted that too, they wanted a sense of community, they've often lost their jobs or their school had shut down, and having those weekly meetings to connect to other young people and [we were]a real positive. So yeah, we're definitely going to continue a blended service delivery both online and in person.* (Participant 4)

> *Just people – even not regional and rural; if you just live really far out, like, you could be living in Dandenong, and we've had most of our workshops in – in the city; that's still like an hour and a half trek out there.* (Participant 1)

As such, the research team believes adequate representation, relationships of trust, and responding to material disadvantage are critical to developing sustainable modes of engagement. This philosophy underpins the development of communication strategies that empower youth and CALD communities to both trust and engage with official sources of information.