



ETHNIC VOICE
NEW ZEALAND INC.

Voice
of the
Ethnic Youth

Orakei Marae
15 October 2005

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Ethnic Voice New Zealand Inc

Ethnic Voice New Zealand Inc. (EVNZ) is an Incorporated Society that was established in May 1999 (originally ASSNZ) to foster collaboration between all Ethnic communities and government agencies.

Objectives:

- Lobbying and speaking on behalf of Ethnic communities on policy matters;
- Identifying key community issues and considering strategies to address these;
- Promoting better communication and understanding between Ethnic communities and government agencies;
- Acting as an advisor for communities on issues;
- Monitoring progress of strategic initiatives and work programmes of various government agencies.

Ethnic Voice New Zealand Inc (EVNZ) :

- is a community organisation established to provide a collective voice for the Ethnic communities through effective community engagement process, consultations and various communication mediums.
- informs and involves the community through executive members' networks, annual general meetings, attending and hosting public forums, and email networks.
- is a unique community organisation because of the diversity, expertise and credibility of individual members of the executive team which includes health, social work, community, university academics and researchers with an interest in all aspect of physical and mental well-being issues

Our core values

Inclusive, Innovative, Supportive, Accountable

Collaborative, Outcomes oriented, Community focused

Introduction

"Our youth are our future" we hear this saying bandied around all the time and yet what do we do to help our youth survive and become the best they can for the future? Being a youth has its own problems, and to add to that being a youth of different ethnicity intensifies these problems.

The objective of this conference was to LISTEN to our youth and the challenges they face to enable us to help them with their challenges. Our aim was to find solutions to take away with us and to begin actioning them.

Holding the conference at Orakei Marae was seen as a step toward the future and an opportunity for cultures to come together in a supportive environment. The whare nui is a meeting place where people can speak honestly and air the challenges they face. The day began by breaking down the barriers which served as the platform for the whole day. Presentations from the youth captivated the audience and silence prevailed as the audience listened and began to understand the challenges they faced. The commitment and energy from the audience to finding solutions was overwhelming and created a positively energetic atmosphere. This energy was translated at the very end to dance as the whole audience rose to their feet and joined the Pacific dancers – all dancing to the one tune – the tune of being a New Zealander. This was a special day and it is hoped from the solutions generated we will make the path easier for our youth to follow.

The report follows the programme and to begin with introduces Orakei Marae and the Maori Powhiri. The first section talks about the challenges the youth face, the second section lists feedback from the audience, and finally the last section reports the wisdom given to us by our keynote speakers. Recommendations are given at the end.

Acknowledgements

Orakei Marae – Apihai and Jo Pihema and whanau who made this event possible and facilitated the day.

Junior Sonny Samuela - whose enthusiasm and hard work contributed to breaking down the barriers on the day. Samuela encouraged everyone to listen not only with their ears but with their heart as well.

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A huge acknowledgement goes to "Our Youth" who presented their challenges; without their courage this could have never happened. And to their colleagues who entertained us with traditional dance.

To our speakers, Joris de Bres, Dr Pita Sharples, and Sandra Alofivae, who added to the day with their professionalism and expertise, thank you.

And finally to the audience whose participation and commitment made the day a success.

Welcome to Orakei

The Marae¹ is a focal institution for the development and maintenance of cultural heritage and language. The Marae represents the physical, spiritual, and symbolic centre for the conduct of tribal affairs. It is here that authority, land, papakainga, cultural heritage and customs all lend character to a marae, help shape its purpose and give substance to a community's prestige or mana. The whare tupuna (ancestral house) is Tumutumwhenua, named after Ngati Whatua's earliest ancestor.



Powhiri

The day started with a Powhiri in which all peoples were welcomed on to Orakei Marae. A traditional Māori welcome on to a marae is called a pōwhiri. Māori is usually the language used during pōwhiri. While the parts of a pōwhiri may vary according to the occasion and the tribal area, Māori language remains a key feature. The basic process of pōwhiri involves the following six steps²:

- Karanga may be described as a unique form of female oratory in which women bring a range of imagery and cultural expression to the first articulation of Māori language in the pōwhiri.
- Whaikōrero or formal speech making follows the karanga. Some of the best Māori language orations are given during pōwhiri when skilled speakers craft the language into a series of verbal images.
- A waiata or song is sung after each whaikōrero by the group the orator represents. It is common to hear older more traditional waiata during pōwhiri.

¹ Ref: http://www.ngatiwhatuaorakei.com/Orakei_Marae.htm

² Ref: <http://www.korero.maori.nz/forlearners/protocols/powhiri.html>

- Koha – a gift, generally an envelope of money, is laid on the ground by the last speaker for the manuhiri (visitors). A local kuia (female elder) may karanga as an expression of thanks. A male from the tangata whenua will pick up the koha.
- Hongi – the pressing of noses signifies the joining together of tangata whenua and manuhiri. Tangata whenua invite the manuhiri to come forward to shake hands (hariru) and hongi.
- Hākari – the feast, a meal is then shared. This usually signifies the end of the pōwhiri.

For most attendees this was a new and unique experience, and experiencing something new added to their day.

Opening of the Voice of the Ethnic Youth

The aim of this conference was to begin understanding the challenges our youth face so we are able to assist them with their struggle fitting into New Zealand society and to help our youth feel confident about who they are as a new Kiwi. Therefore it felt only right to open the conference with the New Zealand/Aotearoa anthem. Whatever our colour race, or creed we are all “kiwis”. The anthem set the scene for the day which was to work towards acceptance, respect, and understanding.

Apihai Pihema

Apihai Pihema welcomed everyone to Orakei. His welcome was heartfelt, and he shared with the audience his feelings of being overwhelmed at seeing so many beautiful faces and people that had a passion for the future of Aotearoa. Pihema told the audience, “our people have been through what you have been through, and when we struggle it gives us more determination and willingness and hope for the future.” Today we are here creating another ‘iwi’ an “**Iwi of Kiwi**”. We have all come from the cradle of civilisation, and we have all trekked to wherever our people trekked to and settled. Things, beyond our control, change that force us to relocate. We cannot divide ourselves this only causes war, we need to find a way to live in peace, and we need to share. Pihema finished by saying, “I had tears of joy when I saw you all this morning, thank you for coming to this hui today and welcome.”

Voice of the Ethnic Youth

All of the youth spoke from their hearts, and I thank them again for the courage they showed presenting their challenges. These challenges were heartfelt, and we as an

audience have the opportunity to help these youth with their struggles. While you read these challenges put yourself in their shoes, and begin to understand what they are going through and think about how you can help them.

Africa

The youth from Africa came from three different countries, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Burundi. Doris³ came to New Zealand not knowing any English language or English culture. Not being able to speak English created many difficulties for Doris. To overcome the language barrier she used sign language, writing, and pictures however, this did not always help. Doris explained that because she was not able to speak the language she found it harder to fit in at school, in society, and most importantly was unable to contribute.

As well as the language barrier Doris looked different and dressed differently which contributed to her isolation. With no students or family to help her settle Doris experienced great culture shock. Contributing to culture shock was the difference in how New Zealanders live, and Doris told the audience, in Burundi everyone knows everyone and we are all like a family, but here in NZ people shut the doors behind them and are very private; she explains she has learnt to stop speaking to strangers. Doris is now settled in NZ and has recently achieved her postgraduate certificate which is a great credit to her.



Adetoro began his presentation by saying, "what is worth doing is worth doing well". Adetoro came to NZ from Nigeria to study. His challenges included the different education and study systems in NZ and economic acceptance, that is, working to support his study. The expectation on students in Nigeria is high as parents work hard to pay fees, and education is of high importance. However, in New Zealand study expectations are very different and almost seemed casual to Adetoro; thus he has had to make big adjustments. It was a big journey to come to NZ and a very high cost, and Adetoro, like many other students, needs an income to survive. For Adetoro the challenge is employment discrimination. He has found that he is often invited for an interview, and when they see he is African they do not employ him. He feels that Nigerians need to work hard to change the perception New Zealanders have of them.

Enos carried on this thread and said the "challenges that face Africans in NZ could be summed up in one word discrimination.". Most Africans face discrimination in employment, and when they are accepted are more likely to be accepted for a job well below their skill

³ To protect the youth only first names will be used.

level and are paid less. Many employers do not open the doors to African job seekers based on negative cultural, educational, and technological perception. He feels the perception is that Africans are not well educated, and not very technologically advanced, and that these perceptions are used to assess them.

Enos also talked about changing the perception and the African community have began doing this through increased awareness through media, political forums and seminars. He feels that the NZ government should also intervene. Enos finished by reminding us that Africans bring diversity to the NZ workplace. He said, "we may not be the same as you but our skills and hardworking can make a good contribution to this country."

Sri Lanka – Tamil

We can see by the shape of the map of Sri Lanka why it was thought of as the pearl of the Indian Ocean, however today it is representative of much less. Today it represents a tear drop – tears shed by a mother for a son lost to aerial bombing, tears shed by a father who lost a daughter to economic embargos and lack of basic care, tears shed by a sister whose brother disappeared in an army round-up. We are not here because we want to be, but because we had to survive explained Nirupa.



Where do I begin says Dhashi. She recalls a discussion she overheard when she was younger regarding identity and wondered what it meant, and it is only now that she has begun to understand this discussion. Dhashi came to NZ when she was eight and very quickly adopted NZ lifestyle, values, and language. She cannot speak Tamil and soon felt like an 'extra' within her own society, many of whom had not wanted to come to NZ. Now when she goes back to Sri Lanka to visit Dhashi finds she does not belong; there is no connection.

Dhashi spoke about the challenge that many Sri Lankan's face and that is parents forcing the traditional culture onto their children. She recalls a time when she felt so embarrassed when her mum picked her up from school wearing a sari. Today her attitude is changing toward her cultural heritage, and she looks to her parents and Sri Lankan society for guidance. She feels it is the parent's responsibility to teach their children of their cultural heritage but not to force it upon them.

Marino's story again focussed on identity and growing from a boy to a man from one world to another – a man living in two realities - living in NZ in a traditional Sri Lankan family. Marino was seven when he came to NZ and describes it as running into a forest he'd never been in, and every direction was unclear, every ditch a learning curve, and every ray of

sunshine an opportunity. He went on to say the forest led him to a house full of different people with different faces who responded to him and brought warmth and comfort so that he forgot his old house.

One of the challenges Marino talks about is the desire to fit in and be like everyone else, and this desire denied any memories or affection with the old house. This new house he so



desperately wanted to belong to was NZ. Marino felt that if he included the culture of his old house he would not fit in with the people of the new house and that they would make fun of him and consider him alien; fitting in was most important. He justified the denial of the old house by saying, "who revisits the old house anyway?" He has begun to understand that the fight to fit in was not in his reality, and his friends accept him for who he is. Marino's parents have guided him in his quest to find out who is really is. Marino is now 17 yrs old, and NZ has accepted him for

who he is, and he has come to understand that he does not need to live in two houses. He finished by saying that his houses were under renovation to become one.

Nirupa began by saying "I'm Rootless – having no roots, neither here nor there". Nirupa is 17 years old - too old to be a child too young to be an adult; she is neither here nor there, she can leave school but is not yet accepted in University, neither here nor there –Nirupa is rootless. Although all teenagers have to go through this stage for a migrant teenager there are additional challenges. "I say I plan to go to university" says Nirupa, "however that has been planned for me and is an expectation from my parents." Her friends ask her why she doesn't just do what she wants. It is hard for her NZ friends to understand these cultural expectations, and that it is something that is expected in her society and something she cannot just break away from. The challenge is that Nirupa is not fully Kiwi but also not fully Tamil, and in her own words she is "too Tamil for NZ and to NZ for Sri Lanka; so who am I? It begs the question, is it better to have roots and an identity and be discriminated against or have no roots at all? Nirupa's solution to these challenges is to foster understanding, especially for the war torn countries, at an early age as young as primary school.

Pacific Islands

Asi's dream was to come to NZ and now it is a reality, and he has been in NZ for two years studying, from Western Samoa. Trying to adapt to NZ lifestyle has been a challenge for Asi, especially in culture, language, and education. When he first came to NZ Asi experienced culture shock, and NZ was nothing like he expected, which made him feel extremely isolated. Different cultural norms, such as respecting your elders, are shown

differently in NZ and Samoan culture. Discipline expected in schools is also very different in NZ which added to Asi's feeling of isolation.

Asi says, for most Samoan men once they have finished school they get a job, and their pay goes straight to the family. My parents do not understand why I want to further my education and keep pushing me to get a job, however my goals are different. A real challenge for me is the English language, and I regret that I did not spend more time learning it before I came to NZ but I was in Samoa then and we speak Samoan. To achieve my goals, I have to get over the fear of speaking English. In class some students laugh at my English which makes me feel uncomfortable, and sometimes I don't understand because of the different accents and people speaking too fast. I overcome this by using gestures to help understanding. Even though I want to fit in my culture will always come first. Asi finished by saying "there is no place like home".

Krystal was born and bred in NZ and is of Cook Island/European heritage. She grew up in the Pacific Island community and tells quite a different story. She says Pacific Islanders were classified as not intelligent, lazy, and that they ate too much. Eating too much is a real issue in Pacific Island communities and there are many health problems that come with it. However, it is part of the culture; they love eating and it brings people together.



Growing up in the Island community was difficult explains Krystal as I was considered a white Cook Islander and therefore was left out many times. For example Cook Island people would say "don't talk to her she doesn't know she's a typical European". So as a white Cook Islander I never really fitted in Island culture or European NZ culture. I was always put down and like my sister said before I was "rootless". Even playing in the women's rugby team I was always put to the side. Pacific Islanders are great "mockers" of their own race says Krystal which did not help her situation. Like Asi, Krystal's parent's expectation is for her to go to work and support the family, and they don't understand why Krystal wants to further her education. Krystal wants to be a teacher and be accepted in the Cook Island community. She pleaded to everyone to get to know who someone else is and then accept that's who they are.

Maria's presentation pulled at everyone's heartstrings as she courageously spoke about the struggle she and her family have been through. Maria, like many of our youth, is pressured by high expectations from her parents; however she sees these challenges as obstacles she is determined to overcome and feels she will become stronger because of this. Maria's sister died at the age of 10, and as Maria told her story the memories of her sister overwhelmed her. Because of her sister's death Maria and her family migrated to NZ in the

70's to create a better future for the family, for better education, for a better health care, and for better job opportunities. Unlike Asi and Krystal, Maria is expected to go to school and University and do well; however like Asi and Krystal the expectation is that this education should lead to getting a well paid job to support her family. Her parents expect



this from her and remind her about the sacrifices they have made for her. Apart from family expectations Maria also finds she does not fit-in in her community because of her German and Tongan heritage. She does not particularly like the Tongan food and does not speak Tongan. Not fitting into her own community leaves her feeling isolated and lost. She finished by

sharing a quote from the breast cancer bracelet she was wearing "Share knowledge spread hope."

Cambodia

The Cambodian presentation began with a traditional Cambodian dance and gave the audience an insight into the Cambodian culture. Lee, who spoke first, arrived in NZ in 1998 and spoke about a challenge that has him in turmoil. Lee's family are Buddhist and every week they would pray and give offerings to Buddha at the temple. In NZ they continued to practice Buddhism until 2002 when his mother went to church with a friend. From that day on she stopped going to the temple and began going to church and praying to Jesus, as she thinks he helps her more. The challenge for Lee is that his mother wants him to change to Christianity and is pressuring him to change. For Lee, his Buddhist faith is familiar, part of his culture, and a place where he can get together with his friends. Lee wants to be with his friends, wants to hold on to a part of his culture from home, and is struggling with the change in his mother and the pressure she is putting upon him to change.

Truong spoke about keeping her cultural tradition alive through her parents experience, wisdom and knowledge. She felt it was important to mix and blend her own culture and the NZ culture. There is such a diverse variety in NZ now which adds to the vibrancy of NZ. Truong spoke about her challenges saying as a migrant she is neither New Zealander nor a Cambodian but something combined. She felt that some migrant parents were too conservative and hold on to the old ways not allowing themselves or their children to integrate into the NZ culture. Truong stressed she values the generations before her but their cultures are different. She finished off by saying "I am proud of my roots but I am true to myself."

Another challenge for some Cambodian youth is having to interpret for older parents or grandparents who do not speak English. This has become a major challenge as youth are missing school, because they have to go with parents and are relied upon to interpret. It also increases stress on the youth who are trying to fit in at school and in society.

Lastly we watched a video made by the Cambodian community. Unfortunately technology failed us but as we watched it became clear that we didn't need sound as we could see the expression and read the language through the pictures. The video portrayed communities being pulled together by soccer. It did not matter who you were; soccer brought cultures together and has helped break down the barriers for the young Cambodian community.

Asia



The Asian youth came from Hong Kong, China, and South Korea and expressed what an honour it was to be there. Tony began by showing some slides of his homeland so the audience could get an idea of where he came from. For Tony school has been his major challenge. He says school should be a place where you make friends, but being a migrant student it is not that easy, and even though we are studying and playing sports together we feel uncomfortable in this unfamiliar situation.

Language has been a real barrier, and as Tony said language is the bridge to communication and without the ability to speak English it is harder to get to know others. We need to establish our own culture but also adapt to the local culture. Taking part in sports has helped break down the barriers for Tony, and he says when playing sports it's like one big family, and team members have to trust each other no matter what colour skin or what accent you have. We need to be open to new experiences and get involved. Tony finished by saying "be open but be cautious, live but stay thinking."

John began by showing the 2002 Korean soccer world cup and it became clear why later in his presentation. John thanked everybody for the opportunity to share his challenges. He talked about how he felt when he first came to NZ likening it to a big forest, where the air was fresh and sweet and such beauty all around. John had respiratory problems when he lived in Korea but since living in NZ his respiratory problems are much better. So, back to soccer, which he was crazy about, but what drove John crazy was there was no soccer on TV in NZ only rugby, rugby, and rugby. John finally decided that if he wanted to keep in touch with Korean soccer, his passion, his life, he would have to wait four years for the world cup or purchase Sky TV. John has adapted and now he watches rugby and goes crazy about rugby. He feels rugby is a medium of 'mana' and pride and pulls people together.

His other challenge was the pace of life. He spoke about how fast life was in Korea and his first thought of New Zealanders was that they were lazy. But he has learnt now that it is a different way of life, one which focuses on enjoying life. John explained that we could learn from each other – Koreans should learn that there is more to life than rushing around and New Zealanders should learn the determination and perseverance of the Koreans. He finished by saying I love NZ, NZ is now my country and I am proud to serve her, but I consider both NZ and Korea as my home.

Jordan who is from Hong Kong firstly informed the audience about his last name which is 'Hui' and oddly enough was also a Maori word but translated meant something totally different. Translated in Maori Hui means a 'meeting' and is pronounced totally differently. There are 8 million people in my country of mixed cultures. Jordan speaks about the perceptions people have of Hong Kong and compares Hong Kong with NZ this helped the audience to understand the difficulties he has had moving from one culture to another.



Hong Kong is technologically advanced; the skyline is of thirty storey buildings and homes are tiny with no view and the streets are crowded and life expectancy is low. When he first came to NZ he couldn't believe the openness of the countryside, the friendliness of the people, the seemingly emptiness in the streets, and that people lived longer. It still amazes him to see an elderly person driving or doing the gardening. Jordan finds the schooling relaxed but different. He says in NZ the teachers are very much focussed on the development of the students, but in Hong Kong if you want to listen you sit at the front and if you don't you sit down the back. For Jordan also the greatest challenge has been language and it has taken him four years to master spoken English, however he says he has not yet mastered written English. He says "so little time but I am lucky to be here". Jordan finished by thanking the audience for welcoming him and his team mates into this beautiful country.

Voice of the Audience

The amount of feedback given showed the enthusiasm and commitment of the audience. The audience was split into groups and given one challenge that the youth are experiencing and asked to brainstorm solutions. The youth also participated in the group feedback session and the results overwhelmingly showed the commitment of the people to helping the youth of today. The audience feedback to the challenges follows.

Racism

- Increase knowledge of cultural difference among students
- Create more opportunities to share cultures
- Set up a specific department in schools to resolve racial discrimination related disputes
- Create activities that appeal to youngsters to participate and celebrate differences fusion activities – making fusion cool (sports, dance, music)
- Trading cultures day – families to adopt a student from a different culture for a weekend (e.g. friend of child)
- Have a 'Cultural' themed week throughout the year: beliefs etc. = sharing
- **Promote understanding in host community that migrants are a valuable asset**
- Re-educate and challenge media when they stereotype, and/or generalise negatively to minority groups
- Target individual cultures and encourage that community to mix and mingle with others (start small)
- Encourage different communities to come together and participate in activities for youths
- International exchange schemes – mingling

Discrimination

- Celebrate positive achievements of diverse cultures, celebrate diversity
- Run a campaign like "know me before you judge me" (TV ads etc)
- Develop strategies for Attitude change, Behaviour change, Culture change
- Develop programmes in schools based on cultural awareness – multicultural level. This could include visits to temples, mosques (from primary age)
- Share cultural celebrations
- Reverse racism – no fault, no blame message
- Teach the youth to respect themselves; their identity and their self esteem – and to accept their own identity
- Government and communities need to address social inequality, racial crime; and prejudice
- We need more positive role models on NZ television programmes
- Teaching people to "lighten up" about culture through humour

Identity

- Expose young people to positive cultural experiences
- Youth take regular visits to homeland if possible
- Attendance to cultural events e.g. Polyfest, Dawali and Pasifica
- Create opportunities for the youth to learn about their own cultural traditions
- More funding directed at cultural understanding and identity
- More conferences held where people can express themselves and learn

Language

- Awareness of others languages –building, schools only? Who's responsibility?
- Create opportunity to share and learn different languages
- Develop programmes to provide a foundation to those who failing
- Perception – building positive norms, using community support, volunteer factors – lead to social understanding
- Better training for tutors - holistic
- Break down perceived barriers of various cultures to encourage interaction
- Activities run by youth to support cross cultural knowledge e.g. Folklore Festivals

Family

- Give youth a choice regarding studies, lifestyle; career and encourage parental participation, and support in education and life choices
- Increase the love – preserve family ties and relationships
- Learning begins at home
- Discipline – different for each culture; why change that?
- Relationships with extended family especially with family from their parents country of origin can be difficult
- Create likeminded communities – linking families
- Keep cultural values alive at home – language, values, heritage/treasure; If the family doesn't nobody else will
- Need financial education support

Family Expectations

- Educating parents, involving parents, and parents talking to parents

- Consult with youth regarding parental challenges
- Run more forums and make them accessible to everyone
- Gently push barriers at home
- Use talk back radio to educate and create understanding
- Develop community and support groups and networks
- Promote self identity – exchange of ideas
- Encourage being in “the best of both worlds”

Voice of the Speakers

Dr Pita Sharples

Dr Sharples began by expressing that he felt privileged to be there. He sympathised with the audience and said the experiences described by the youth have been shared by most of us in the room today especially that of acceptance and being stereotyped by our looks. Sharples talked about his own experiences as a young Maori coming from rural Hawkes Bay to Auckland University where he was the first Maori student accepted. For him it was difficult to get used to the new systems, living in a town, and being a minority. Dr Sharples says it took him a long time to adjust and what helped him was finding a cultural mentor. His mentor taught him to feel good about being Maori, to be himself, and never to forget who he was.

Sharples spoke about the richness that the youth have brought to NZ and that was important to the growth of NZ. He said nobody needed to cross the track and in NZ where there is a dominant way of life he encouraged everyone to show that their way is just as beautiful and has something to give to the country. Sharples encouraged the youth not to give up and said even when he felt estranged and failed his exams suddenly something clicked and now he has a PhD, actually he said “now I have 10 degrees”, so never give up but give yourself time. What is important is that we need to teach each other not even about tolerance but about understanding that we all have something beautiful about us.

Sharples finished by saying we all have a different way, we’re all human beings and what I want you to do today is to remember how valuable you are; you are very important part of this country Aotearoa and we welcome you to NZ.

Joris de Bres

Joris de Bres began by saying it was wonderful to be able to sit and listen to all the youth and thought maybe we (adults) should all 'shut up' and leave the race relations to the youth - the new New Zealanders. You have the experiences we can't understand and today have discussed sensible insightful things to do in a positive way. We need to get on with it and action it now.

De Bres asked three questions of the audience (1) has anybody had personal experience of discrimination? (2) has anyone been actually discriminated against? and (3) has anyone experienced racial violence? There were many in the room that had experienced some level of discrimination. There are still high levels of discrimination, harassment in NZ in the employment, housing and education sectors. However if you don't tell anyone how do we know it is going on? NZ police are strongly enforcing racial issues today. In Nelson, where several racial attacks have occurred the police have decided to take a zero tolerance policy on racism. Any racism is a criminal offence and you must tell the police about any discrimination directed at you, your family or your colleagues and have the confidence to speak out. Often societies who lack confidence and are disadvantaged get discriminated against. I have listened to you all today and you have the confidence!

As I listened to the groups each one of you thanked us for welcoming you to NZ and most of us here are from overseas so we have been thanking each other. The question is, how we reach mainstream NZ to thank them said De Bres. We need to be able to reach everyone and be able to discuss the issues. The dominant race Pakeha may be feeling threatened, ignorant or prejudiced about the changing face of NZ. Part of my job as the Race Relations Commissioner is to make sure everyone has a voice, we need to build confidence for each person to have their say, we need to cross the divide, we need intercultural communication and we need to talk together. It is forums like these that break down the barriers and we need more of them.

De Bres urged everyone to understand and celebrate our cultures together. He finished by reciting the nursery rhyme Hickory Dickory Dock. If you did not grow up in NZ this rhyme may be foreign to you as it was to De Bres when he was six years old and new to NZ. He didn't know what it was or what it meant but this rhyme was the beginning of breaking down the barriers for him.

Sandra Alofivae

Sandra Alofivae began by informing the audience if she were to be true to her cultural roots she would spend about half an hour giving salutations to show respect to everybody's ancestors, however time did not allow this and it showed how we adapt when we have to

in certain situations. Alofivae spoke about the Families Commission, a new body formed in 2004 to advocate for NZ families. She says the Families Commission have four main objectives (1) community engagement, (2) policy, (3) research, and (4) public information. To achieve this they gather information and inform advocacy of challenges and issues relating to family to influence change in policy and to educate the public.

You are very important to the commission because without your input we are not fully informed about what needs to be done to help families. The Commission really needs you to participate in changing the country and not to be afraid to fill out surveys or be interviewed. Without your input we do not have the information we need to advocate for positive change. You must see yourself as adding value. Unfortunately change does not happen over night but you need to remember without your input it will never change.

Alofivae told the audience that the government needs evidence-based data to bring about change and reminded them that experiences are different for a child, youth or parent. We need your continued participation to enable us to feed your challenges back in a positive way and advocate for change. You are family and we need to know how your family functions and what makes it successful. We need to know clearly what the issues are to make sure the policy works.

To finish Alofivae spoke about her admiration for all migrants saying "you are flitting through two worlds and this is shaping who you are today and is a tribute to who we are". She encouraged everyone to focus on the distant horizon – we know what we want it to look like, we know what it wants to be – we are creating it!

The End of the Day

After all the speakers were finished the Pacific Island group were going to entertain us with Island traditional dance, however what happened was magical and brought us together as New Zealanders. The Pacific Island group started their dance with Island music beating throughout the whare nui. The energy this created and with a little encouragement saw the whole audience get to their feet and join in the to the beat of the music - the beat of being a New Zealander.

Conclusion

The challenges our youth face are real and they identified some of their major hurdles

Discrimination in NZ is real and becoming more frequent. Migrants must understand that discrimination is an offence by law and report any type of discrimination. If migrants do not have the confidence to report discrimination nobody will know it is happening. We are often discriminated against because we look different or because of stereotypes. More education and understanding is needed and we all have a responsibility to educate all New Zealanders.

A major challenge expressed by our youth was identity. It appears that the youth are being pulled in two directions firstly their own want to fit into NZ society and secondly the want of their parents to uphold traditional cultural values, thus not allowing them to form an identity of their own or be comfortable with whom they are. Both traditional and new cultural identities are needed to create a new identity for the youth. This can only be done with the understanding of parents and that parents guide their children through wisdom, experience and tradition but not force traditional cultural onto their children.

Language continues to be a problem for migrants today and often migrants came to NZ with very little English. Apprehension of speaking English for fear of getting it wrong also adds the problem. Expectations on youth to translate for parents are also adding to the stress youth already face.

Family expectations are great on migrant youth and often clash with expectations placed on NZ youth. These expectations make it difficult for the migrant youth to fit in with NZ youth who are given more individual choices and freedom. Not being able to fit in with people of your own age is lonely and pushes our youth to the peripheral where it is even lonelier.

Our responsibility is to help our youth form their identity using both their traditional and NZ culture and help them become the people of our future.

Recommendations

Our Youth are our future and we need to ensure that we help them grow into a society that is tolerant, accepting and respect each other for who they are.

Racism and Discrimination

To combat racism and discrimination it is recommended that:

- Specific departments at schools are established to resolve racial discrimination related disputes
- Schools educate students on cultural diversity and awareness of different values and attitudes
- Media are constantly challenged and re-educated when stereotyping or generalising about a culture in articles or news stories
- A “cultural celebration” week is established in which schools and communities participate through lectures, plays, activities to promote cultural understanding
- An Ethnic Youth Group is established for all youth living in New Zealand to promote understanding, acceptance and tolerance and encourage integration
- Achievements of diverse cultures are celebrated and publicized
- Government and communities develop strategies for attitude change, behaviour change, and cultural change
- The youth are taught to respect themselves, their identity and self esteem
- More positive cultural role models to be shown on New Zealand television programmes

Identity

To help our youth create a positive identity for themselves it is recommended that:

- Youth are given opportunities to learn about there own cultural and traditions
- Youth are given the opportunity to learn about the New Zealand culture and traditions
- Funding is made available for conferences and teaching
- Expose young people to positive cultural experiences

Language

Language is a constant barrier for some migrant youth. To combat language difficulties it is recommended that:

- Foundation programmes are provided to help those who are failing
- Educators are trained to have a better understanding of intercultural communication; not only verbal but also nonverbal communication
- The negative perceptual barriers about people who speak English as their second language, such as language defined as intelligence, are addressed
- Government allocate more funding for interpreting services

Family and Family Expectations

Families play an integral part in our lives. For migrants the family unit can easily be split through frustrations, changes and stresses of a new country. We recommend that:

- Forums are held with the support of government to support and educate parents on cultural differences, school systems, expectations, New Zealand culture, and peer pressures felt by migrant youth
- Opportunities are made for migrant parents to get together with other migrant and New Zealand parents
- A generic disciplinary system is understood and upheld in families and communities however not discounting unique cultural disciplinary systems
- Families keep cultural values, traditions, and heritage alive at home
- Forums are held for ethnic youth and parents to identify challenges and problems faced and together find solutions

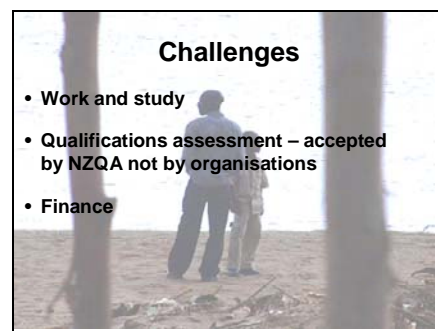
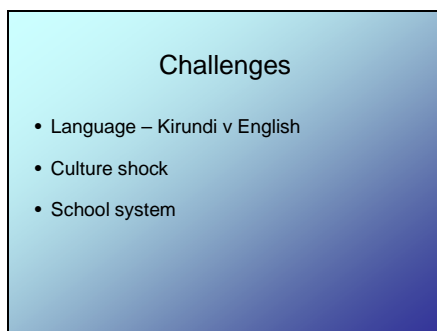
Appendix

Appendix I Presentation from Africa

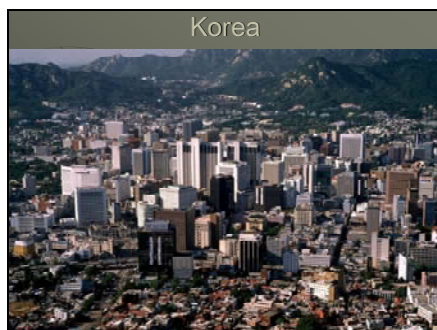
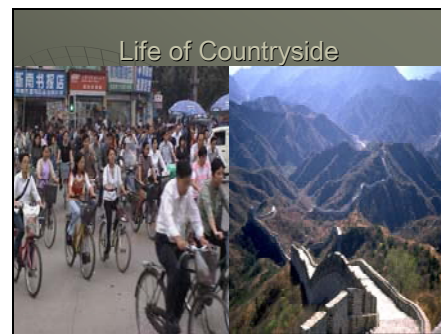
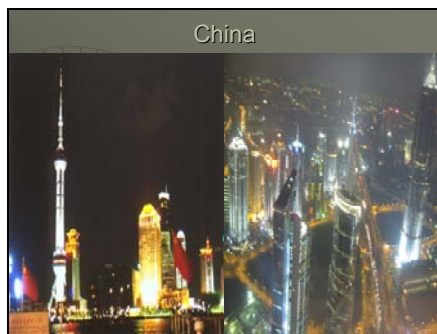
Appendix II Presentation from Asia

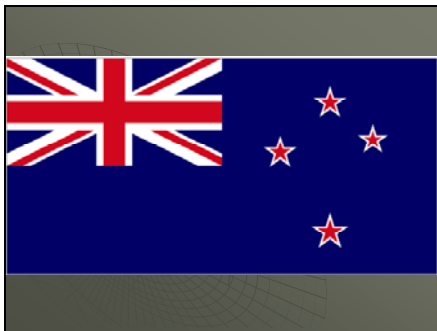
Appendix III Article written by an attendee - Christopher Schakowsky

Presentation from Africa



Presentation from East Asia





Article written by Christopher Schakowsky



Whitireia International at the Ethnic Youth Congress 2005

Kia Ora

On Saturday, October 15, 2005 I was fortunate enough to have been invited to attend the *Ethnic Youth Congress* of New Zealand at the Orakei Marae, which overlooks the Hauraki Gulf of Auckland city. I was invited along with our school counsellor, Christina Honan, to accompany our students representing the Korean, Russian, and Chinese cultures at Whitireia International. The purpose of this congress was to give the ethnic youth of New Zealand a chance to voice their experiences, concerns and ideas revolving around life in New Zealand for the non mainstream residents.

As a foreigner myself, hailing from the *Great White North*, otherwise known as Canada (which in the Hurontarian language means ‘village’), it was a wonderful and unique chance to be welcomed onto this beautiful Marae, experiencing Hongi, witnessing the Maori methods of communicating with their ancestors and to experience the wonderful hospitality of the Whanau of the Orakei Marae for a start.

It was also a chance for me to hear from the youth, their impressions of and feelings toward being non mainstream New Zealanders and for many, also being non mainstream people from their or their parents’ homelands as well. One young girl said it best when she described herself as, “neither here nor there.”

The day began with the traditional welcoming of all of us representing various educational institutions from AIS St Helen’s, to various high schools in Auckland. Then we had speeches from such people as Dr. Pita Sharples and the Minister for Race Relations, who spoke of their experiences and also their vision for the future of New Zealand as a peaceful multicultural society. Also present throughout the day were other political figures such as Pansy Wong, and various members of political parties who have a vested interest in the ideas being presented.

The people were from all corners of the globe, Sudan, Nigeria, Cambodia, Samoa, Japan, China and Canada to name a few. They all shared one thing though, and that is New Zealand is now their home for one reason or another. Many brought images from their countries to share, while others came dressed proudly in traditional garb while they spoke of their challenges of cultural-identification in New Zealand.

We were fed tremendously well and then continued on throughout the afternoon discussing tools and solutions for the future of New Zealand. This gave us all a chance to meet, discuss and communicate our experiences. We finished by presenting our solutions and ideas to the audience. We all seemed to be on the same wavelength in that we were all suggesting ways to better communicate with each other and be exposed to each other's cultures. The purpose of this ideology is to stop stereotyping, curb ignorance and reduce segregation in New Zealand and build a country not with one dominant culture and many marginalised ones, but one overarching and inclusive culture that welcomes and integrates many cultures into its composition.

All in all it was a magnificent experience to hear these active youth speak passionately in the wonderfully supportive atmosphere of a Marae. In my country we often speak of multiculturalism and although you can see it everywhere you go, sadly we very rarely include the *Peoples of the First Nations* as they are called to gain input, be exposed to their cultures and hear their vision for our *Village*. Seeing these amazing youth speak with clear support from Pakeha and Maori New Zealand made me feel that this country's future is in good hands.

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