

How-Are-You

Issue No. 1

**'Empathy
cannot be taught'**

***Education is
the key***

***'Impossible
is a thought
not our truth'***

***MIGRANT
WOMEN
SHARE THEIR
STORIES***

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We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Wilan clan as the Traditional Owners of the land on which the magazine was produced and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters, and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

‘Impossible is a thought not our truth’

ABOUT THE MAGAZINE

How-Are-You is an exclusive magazine for women from migrant & refugee backgrounds regardless of their race, culture, religion, social status, educated or non-educated women etc... It is a forum where women from all walks of life meet, connect to share their compelling and authentic life stories in an intimate Sisterhood-to-Sisterhood tone to *Inform, Inspire, Invigorate* and *Empower* some of us who from time to time navigate rough surface of own lives. At How-Are-You, a woman finds herself and believes ‘She can’, because she is heard and valued. ‘Yes, you are Enough! just the way you are, no more no less!

She is sacred.

OUR MISSION

To inform, inspire, invigorate, and empower women through our publications and build competency through our Learning & Development programs (L&D) enabling women to achieve their full Woman-*ity*.

OUR VISION

A World where a woman finds her-*Self*, grows, and builds a better life for herself and those around her, through her own lens.

OUR SERVICES

Publication - Competency – Consulting - Multi-Stakeholders’ Partnerships (PCCM)

1. Publication:

Digitally publishing ground-breaking editorial magazines through which women from migrant and refugee backgrounds authentically share their compelling life stories to *Inform, Inspire, Invigorate* and *Empower* other women while weaving a supportive network.

2. Competency Building:

How-Are-You magazine expands beyond its digital flagship to implement multi-dimensional and multi-faceted Learning and Development programs in partnership with relevant organisations to build capacity of women responsive to their needs.

3. Consulting Services:

provided to mainstream services to enhance the provision of culturally sensitive client’s services to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) women’s communities.

4. Multi-Stakeholders’ Partnerships:

- We engage with women through the framework of our Voice of Women (VOW), to consult on a wide range of issues informing our decisions making shaping our organisational strategic Plan and operation model.
- We locally and globally work in partnership with relevant organisations in line with our strategic priorities to collaboratively innovate and implement joint-projects and viable solutions to women’s emerging problems. (consulting, informing, collaborating, implementing and reviewing for continuous improvement).

OUR CORE VALUES

Women-Centric: Our business is a woman. We hear her, respect her and value her for who she is.

We are hospitable: What takes you so long to get here? Come on in, there is a room for you too.

Trust: We share our flaws, vulnerabilities, cracks, and triumphs that shape our lives, to let the lights of others heal us, while inspiring other women and build trustworthy long-lasting relationships.

Respect: If I do not respect you for ‘Who you are’, then I do not respect myself.

Impartiality: Please join us, just the way you are.

Inclusion: A platform where the biodiversity of culture and talent collides. We transcend cultural differences to connect through our priorities, goals, and the essence of our Woman-*ity*.

Responsible Leadership: Deliver excellent services that leave positive long-lasting footprint in communities within which we operate.

Shared Leadership: Through an agile operation model we co-lead projects in conjunction with stakeholders to devise collaborative responsive solutions to women’s issues.

OUR OBJECTIVES

The sudden eruption of today’s global health pandemic COVID-19, in a world already experiencing rapid technological change, economic downturn (Global financial crisis 2007-2009), competition for resources and an increase in society’s awareness of social issues (climate change, equality of opportunity, diversity, and inclusion) are forces exerting tremendous pressure on companies which can no longer guarantee either long-term or full-time employment. Peripheral positions that usually women from migrant and refugee backgrounds occupy are rendered unstable as less agile companies are forced to ‘Trim or Shut’ thus reducing career opportunities. Against the backdrop of these socioeconomics and health challenges, How-Are-You Magazine attempts to shed some light on the impact they have on the intersectionality between gender and ethnicity while striving to build a healthy prosperous society that transcends race, religion, culture, gender to connect women through the quintessential Woman-*ity*. We aim to:

- Build bridges of understanding between women from migrant and refugee backgrounds and the rest of the society.
- Provide an in-depth understanding of challenges that women from migrant and refugees backgrounds face, to help inform policy and decision makers and aiming to enhance service provision and fostering social cohesion in our society.
- Build the capacity of women through shared leadership and multi stakeholder’s partnerships, innovative projects, training and workshops specifically tailored to women’s needs so as to enhance civic and economic participation as well as social health.
- Build capacity through our internship program to aspiring magazine’s writers, editors, photographers, videographers and journalists. How-Are-You is a platform for coaching and mentoring emerging artists who will work closely with our L&D program team.
- Celebrate success stories of women from migrant and refugee backgrounds who have made a positive impact in our society and/or shattered glass ceilings in various sectors.
- Uncover the hidden talents of the most marginalised and vulnerable women from migrant and refugee backgrounds in our society and to assist them in accessing employment.
- Positively contribute to enhancing best service delivery models for women from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

OUR VOLUNTEERS

How-Are-You Magazine would like to thank the Steering Committee, which is made up of volunteers, for their exceptional tenacity, resilience, patience, and their passionate work for the Magazine's project.

Chantal Kabamba

Chantal is a road scholar who successfully completed a Master of Business Administration (MBA), a Postgrad in Business Administration, a Postgrad in Economics, and a Bachelor's degree in Humanities, all in Australia. A Former Chairperson of Community Leadership Network Inc (CLNV). She successfully devised and oversaw the organisational Strategic Plan, Learning and Development Programs (L&D) and Stakeholders' Engagement Plan (SEP). Chantal also co-founded and was a former President for the Congolese Community of Victoria (CCV). In addition, Chantal has extensive expertise and knowledge in property management through her career.

Her passion to assist women started early on during her work placement at a maternity and childcare centre in the Democratic Rep Congo (her country of origin) as part of secondary school curriculum. 'It was there that I witnessed malnourished children with mothers unable to afford medical care for their children let alone properly feeding them. Poverty stricken women's communities and children are still very much alive and rapidly growing throughout the world'. Following her authentic call to assist women, Chantal also worked in Family Violence sector in Melbourne assisting women and children to live safe as 'Free members' of our society. *'It was an eye opener and a steep learning curve for me'*.

'A Woman is a Sacred Being', she says.



Krishanthi Liyanage

Krishanthi Liyanage worked as Lab Technologist Manager in a Family Planning Organisation in Sri Lanka, her country of origin. In Melbourne, she has been working as Childcare Educator for Whittlesea Community Connections (WCC). Krishanthi is a member of the 'Advocacy Women's Group' at Women Information and Referral Services (WIRE) and 'I Rise' project at Co-health. Krishanthi enjoys writing poems and short stories in Sinhala's language. Passionate about empowering communities, she had no second thought in joining How-Are-you Magazine Project.

'Be kind to one another', she says.



Saranya Pranav

An Accountant by training with extensive accounting experience for over five years in Sri Lanka, her home country. Saranya is primarily working in accounting administration and bookkeeping roles while doing her Master's in International Development at RMIT. She is also a peer educator on 'Let's talk Money program', a financial literacy for Women run by Women's Health in the North (WHIN). Saranya joins How-Are-You Magazine to develop her capabilities in community development and contribute to the wellbeing of women from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities.



Dr Esther Tsafack

Dr Esther Tsafack, originally from Cameroon has a PhD in Economics from Monash University. Dr Tsafack lectured at the University of Yaounde II in Cameroon prior to moving to Australia. *'I am learning to navigate the Australian systems'*. Prior to joining How-Are-You Magazine project, Esther worked with migrant and refugee women as the Vice-Chairperson for the Whittlesea Community Leadership Network (WCLN). She successfully led the Learning and Development (L&D) programs including Leading Women Health and Safety Program (LWHSP), which was sponsored by a range of organisations (Private, NGOs, government such as UNESCO-Australia). Esther currently combines missionary work and economic regulation work.

SUPPORTED BY:



Welcome to How-Are-You Magazine

Editor's note

How-Are-You Magazine is a special ground-breaking authentic magazine for women from migrant and refugee backgrounds. It highlights how migrant and refugee women turned their compelling harrowing life's challenges into cornerstones to build stoic and heroic lives for themselves and their families. We believe life's stories from grass roots like these ones inform, inspire, positively impact and empower most of us women to build resilience when navigating rough surfaces of our lives. As Dr Maya Angelou once said: *'Each time a woman stands up for herself, without knowing it possible, without claiming it, she stands up for all women'*.

We often celebrate and enjoy women's achievements, but very seldom do we strive to understand the steps they took to reach the apex of a pyramid. The darker and deeper are the roots, the stronger and taller is the tree. Does it matter whether your achievements are not engraved on Hollywood's walk of fame or flashed on red carpet? Without any fanfare, it is simply natural for the human soul to find its own way to express itself successfully as a bright star that shines upon all. At How-Are-You Magazine, we celebrate women's quiet authentic achievements that are silently attained in our own backyard, step by step like a bird nesting.

'When you do things from your soul, you feel a river moving in you, a joy' - Rumi.

In this first edition we showcase unique women originally from all parts of the world, unpacking their luggage for the very first time, since landing in Australia. An inspiring role model is Juana Martinez whose childhood was shattered by the revolution in Nicaragua, her home country. The revolution moulded her into a stoic and resilient World's Community Development Worker. She exudes selfless devotion to assist most vulnerable people in Melbourne, South America, and Asia. Despite such a long and demanding trajectory of a career life, Juana dreams of setting up a 'Women's hub', for survivors of family violence in Melbourne.

A movement from darkness to light, education empowers people, as Frederick Douglass puts it: 'Education uplifts the human spirit into the glorious light of truth.' It liberates and gives us an opportunity to better our lives. Sometimes, education might not be accessible to all who wish to study. Marian beat the odds, despite not qualifying for the Commonwealth's HELP-FEES to undertake university studies after first arriving in Australia as she was not yet a citizen of Australia after arriving in Australia. She successfully completed a Bioscience Degree at Deakin university. Following in the footsteps of her father, Marian yearns to be a medical doctor one day...

'Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the perfect present for the test of our civilization' – Mahatma Gandhi.

'To my beloved latest sister Anne-Marie who continues to live through her beautiful children, my nieces, and nephews'.
- Chantal

Happy International Women's Day

March 8th, 2021

If your grand ma or your great grand ma is still with you, what message has she been conveying to you through her thoughts, words, actions, songs, dance, laughter, her pictures, her voice, and the way she lives or lived her life?

If you never really got to meet either of them, please look around at the other women in your family, or your close entourage for the message they have been conveying to you through their thoughts, words, actions, songs, dance, laughter, pictures, voices, and the way they live or lived their lives?

What is the essence of their authentic joy and their Woman-Itty?

If your grand or great grand ma walks into your life today, what message would she give you? We would like to hear from you, please drop us a line at info@howareyoumagazine.com.au

On this Special occasion, please do something special in honouring and celebrating You and the women in your life.

Education is the key

Her childhood suddenly vanished into thin air when she became the carer to her dying mother and a mother to her other two younger siblings at the same time. Nothing, however, could shake Marian's strong belief in education. She strived to complete a couple of university degrees despite navigating thorny paths in her life. Now a wife and a mother of two, she is still determined to be a doctor, one day...



THE BEGINNING

Caring and nursing for her mother at the age of 10 is a world too familiar to Marian. While most 10-year-old children are bathed in tenderness, love and care of their families, Marian was called upon at the age of 9 to look after her dying mother who was suffering from breast cancer. 'She was a very strong woman. I have to say, I learnt a lot from her.' Born in Egypt with two other brothers, Marian's father was a medical doctor who was hardly home because he was working in Saudi Arabia. 'Every year he would come home once a month.'

'From that time on, my life has changed'

To keep up with the challenges of her mother's health condition and the absence of her father, Marian had to exponentially grow both emotionally and practically and at a very rapid pace. Not only did she look after her mother, but she also had to quickly adjust and learn to fulfil her mother's role in caring for her brothers. Most 10-year-old children are reassured to come home to strong parents who provide them with cuddles, freshly cooked food and bedtime stories... The familiar voice and steps of our parents around the house are like songs that reassure us that *'all is well,'* explains Marian. For Marian, that world was alien to her. The storm of her mother's cancer swept all that away from her life, too soon to say the least. After the surgery, her mother was in remission until Marian turned 11. However it was devastating for Marian and family when at the age of 12, her mother's cancer came back again. Marian continued doing what she did best for her mother and her family.

'I Always dreamed of becoming a medical doctor like my dad'

As a young child at the age of 7, Marian's favourite drawings were a human skeleton, and her favourite toys were doctor's instruments. 'I dreamt of becoming a medical doctor like my dad.' Marian's year 12 studies were constantly disrupted because she had to accompany her mother to medical treatments. 'I remember the day the doctor broke such bad news about my mother's prognosis to me. This was heavy stuff for a Year 12 student. I thought I was fainting. So, I had to filter what to tell mum and how to say it because I wanted to keep her spirit high. It was very challenging to look after mum, to keep up with all her

medical appointments, and to sustain high performance at school to enter university while striving to keep the dream of becoming a doctor alive.'

'I decided to get the best out of a bad situation'

Unfortunately, at the end of year 12, Marian did not get a high enough score to start medicine. 'I tried to repeat Year 12, but I was told I would need to repeat Year 11 as well. 'I decided to get the best out of a bad situation.' Although she did not like accounting, Marian enrolled in a Bachelor of Accounting. After graduating, Marian did not look for work because she did not want to be an accountant at all but wanted to have education as a starting point.

In her second-year university, her mother passed away. However, despite such a big loss, Marian got a high distinction in that year. 'It was like a reward from God,' she said. Though she was confused, lost, and grieving for her mother, she had to be strong for her two younger brothers who looked up to her and needed her. They are now both in the USA with their father; one is married pursuing a PhD.



ON MARRIAGE...

‘Thinking about Marriage’

After graduating, like most young women, Marian began thinking of getting married and travelling overseas to fulfil her dream of becoming a medical doctor. ‘In our culture, girls are not allowed to travel by themselves’.

Soon after she met her now husband, whom she fell in love with and has loved ever since, he had to travel to the USA for three years. Marian promised to wait for him and kept the promise despite growing family pressure to leave him and marry someone else. ‘Whoever is destined for you, will always be yours’. Her now husband came back after three years and they got married. Together, they have two beautiful children and share a long, wonderful love story together.

‘Husband was happy to go overseas’

They first travelled to the UK where Marian inquired how she could study medicine. Unfortunately, medicine was not open to her given her circumstances at the time. Upon returning to Egypt, Marian and her husband first applied for skilled migration to Australia, but Marian did not have the three-year work experience in the accounting field as required. They then applied for permanent residency in Canada as skilled migrants, but unfortunately, it did not work out after waiting for two years. At that time, her husband found out that Australia’s immigration policy for skilled migrants had changed. They were now in a better position to reapply successfully. Sadly, by then Marian’s International English Language Testing System (IELTS) results had expired. ‘I had young children and did not want to resit the IELTS because the first one was a struggle.’ Fortunately, the Australian embassy accepted Marian’s three-year old IELTS’s results and they were able to successfully apply for a visa to Australia.

A LONG WALK TO UNIVERSITY

A few months after arriving in Australia, in January 2014, her husband encouraged Marian to explore studying. Despite being discouraged by some people who could only see obstacles to her dream, Marian did not want to give up, she pressed on. Marian approached both Monash

and Melbourne universities, but she was told her degree had expired. It was seven years then since she completed her studies. ‘I was told I will need to do another degree to be able to study medicine and this required redoing Year 12. I did just that because I was prepared to start again’. Marian completed Year 12 and was offered a place at Deakin university for a Bachelor of Biomedical Science. After enrolling, she found out that she was not eligible for the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS-HELP) as she was not yet an Australian citizen. If she wishes to undertake university studies she will need to pay that from her own pocket.

BORROWING TO PAY UNIVERSITY FEES

In the first year of university, Marian managed to pay the fees by working and borrowing from friends. ‘My husband was very supportive and contributed to paying my fees’. Luckily for her, she received a no interest loan from the Coptic Orthodox Church Welfare Organisation, which assists migrants. Many other organisations could not help her because they did not offer loan for study. Marian obtained high distinction at the end of the year! The result encouraged her to press on.



To prepare for the second year, ‘I worked as a cleaner in a school and saved enough money for the first semester fees.’ Marian took another loan from Coptic Orthodox Church Welfare Organisation to cover second year fees. For the third year, she got a paid work placement at the Hudson Institute. For the final year, she worked as a Peer Support Worker at Deakin university and saved to pay her fees. Marian graduated with High distinction! ‘Upon graduation I got a job in the clinical trial field. Unfortunately, it did not last very long. Now I work part time at the Chemist Warehouse.’

‘In a perfect world I would be an oncologist. I was inspired by watching my dad saving lives. Although, I am not young anymore. I will keep trying,’

UNDYING PASSION TO BE A DOCTOR

Marian has previously sat the Graduate Australian Medical School Admissions Test (GAMSAT). Despite not being successful, she still believes and is determined that she can do it. ‘Now I am preparing for the next attempt next year. I will continue studying’.

It was not and still is not an easy journey, ‘I had to study, be a wife, a mother and work, all at the same time.’ A devout Orthodox, Marian attributes all that she has achieved to God. ‘However, the journey is not over yet,’ she said.

SHE VALUES EDUCATION

Marian encourages everyone around her, in her community and in her neighbourhood to study. ‘I believe education empowers women, particularly migrant women’. Marian encouraged her mother-in-law to study English and other women to dream big because they can. ‘In a perfect world I would be an oncologist. I was inspired by watching my dad saving lives. Although, I am not young anymore. I will keep trying,’ she concludes with a smile.

ASCA INAUGURAL SICKLE CELL CONFERENCE

Australian Sickle Cell Advocacy (ASCA) is hosting the first-ever Sickle Cell Disease Conference in Australia, "Breaking the Barriers- A New Horizon" with a Mental Health theme. This is in conjunction with Blood 2021 Meeting, and we are excited to announce that this conference will now be held virtually from the 17th-18th of September. We have an all-inclusion program which will also feature participants from all the major states within Australia and participants of the Amplify Sickle Cell Voices Ten+2 Series, so you do not want to miss this.

If you would like to know more about ASCA please visit:
www.aussicklecelladvocacy.org

For more about the conference please visit:
www.ascaconf.org



AUSTRALIAN SICKLE CELL ADVOCACY INC

— PRESENTS —

BREAKING THE BARRIERS - A NEW HORIZON

THE FIRST - SICKLE CELL DISEASE CONFERENCE IN AUSTRALIA

IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE BLOOD 2021 MEETING

17TH TO 18TH SEPTEMBER, 2021

 **VIRTUAL CONFERENCE**
For More Details Visit <http://ascaconf.org>

SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS



Scan For Registration



Community Development **QUEEN!**



When the curtains of her childhood went up, Juana Martinez witnessed the loss of many lives during the revolution in her home country. The revolution stole her childhood, touched the courants of her love for humanity and cemented her career path in Community development sector forever. Her undying passion to assist people has neither time nor boundaries.



JUANA... A GLOBAL WOMAN!

A very global woman whose heart exudes generosity, open mindedness, and passion to assist the most vulnerable people in communities, Juana is one of her kind! Travelling enriches her perceptions and she embraces all humankind with an open heart. In addition to the countries listed above, Juana has travelled extensively. She has been almost throughout Northern, Southern and Central America, including Bolivia, Venezuela, El-Salvador and Costa-Rica and speaks Spanish, English, Vietnamese, Russian and Portuguese.

Between the age of 14 and 15 Juana lived through the revolution in Costa Rica. 'I saw a lot of my friends and other people I knew being killed.' That really shaped the way Juana sees life and was her ground-breaking moment into the career path of Community Development. Juana supported people by identifying bodies of their family members. She also actively participated in the renowned 'National Literacy campaign' in Nicaragua which was implemented in 1980. She was one of the kids who went to the mountains teaching people how to read and write through a National project in Nicaragua which decreased the illiteracy level from 52% to 20%. 'That was a two-way education because while we taught peasants how to read and write, I was also learning how to milk the cows, to make cheese and tortilla by hands. It changed my life.' Despite coming from a humble background, Juana's life was relatively better than other children living in remote areas of the country. Although her parents were from a working

class, Juana had a privileged life. She had education and a meal every day. 'My parents worked extremely hard. My father had a horse and a cart and transported people from one area to another. My mother worked with her family who owned a catering business.'

Juana was studying nursing while waiting to go to Russia to study medicine. Then, the government launched a national health's project to eradicate polio. She got involved in the project and trained on how to administer a vaccine against polio. Juana went to a village all alone and, being only a 16-17 year old, was terrified. Determined to help change the lives of people, Juana kept praying for the project to go well.

When Juana first came to Australia from Nicaragua, she and her husband helped coordinate the Latin American & Nicaragua Solidarity community for 10 years. They raised funds by selling coffee and used the money to fund women's organisations in Nicaragua, Mexico, El-Salvador, and Guatemala. They helped women in Nicaragua to build Corn's mill as corn is one the staple food in Nicaragua. They also bought some gum boots for children living in remote areas in Nicaragua.

Juana remembered how hard it was for her to settle in Australia with a young family. 'When you don't have the language and support of your family in terms of childcare, it can be a bit difficult.' Originally from Managua in Nicaragua, Juana arrived in Australia 26 years ago with her husband and their three little children. She interrupted her English course because her little one, who was only 2 to 3 months old at the time and was 'crying a lot'. Unlike in Nicaragua where her mother looked after her children when she

worked, in Australia she did not have any of that. Her mother-in law helped her with childcare when they were living in Canberra for a short time.

VERY HAPPY TO JOIN THE WORKFORCE.

'Your Accent, We Don't Understand'

When her little one turned one, Juana decided that it was time for her to try and find work. In the past, she worked for many years as a meteorologist and a Spanish-Russian Translator in her home country. Her husband saw an ad in the paper about childcare position and encouraged her to apply. 'To be honest I did not know how I went during the interview because my English was about 4/10 but miraculously, I got the job!' She spent so many hours commuting because she did not learn how to drive. 'If I did it, anyone can do it', she says confidently. Eventually, around 1997 Juana started work placement in a childcare centre. She took her friend's suggestion that reading children's books is one of the best ways to learn English faster and better. Juana put that advice to practise but she encountered difficulties with children not being able to understand her. 'Your accent, we don't understand', children would say to her. Juana would read again and again to the children but very slowly and clearly this time. With time she got better while the children were also able to understand her as well. 'I was in the workforce, earning some money and made some friends. I felt empowered, not that we struggled financially, I was lucky because my husband had a good job but I was so happy to be working.' Juana worked in childcare centre for approximate about three years.

'I did not know what the word bully meant. It was the first time I came across that word'

Juana got a part time job as an interpreter in a hospital in Melbourne. That was a break-through for her as she felt that the hospital was very professional. She would leave her

child in childcare next to the train station while the other two were at school. That job did not last long because she thought she was the only one who was from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) background. 'I was subjected to bullying by some women for the first time in my life. I did not know what the word bully meant because it was the first time, I came across that word.' Juana did not know how to respond, let alone what to do about it. 'Many migrants have no knowledge of their rights in the workplace, let alone where to report bullying. I used to come home crying.' Juana decided to leave the hospital but promised herself that she will never let anyone treats her like that anymore. 'Bullying in a workplace destroys your self-esteem and damages your wellbeing.'

IN VIETNAM...

Juana enrolled in a master's degree in Social Work at Latrobe University but did not complete the course as her husband who worked as the director of Australia Volunteer Abroad got a job in Hanoi, Vietnam where they lived for two years. With a reference letter from Latrobe Uni, Juana worked as a volunteer, training teachers in Community Development (CD). The project delivers training on drug and alcohol programs for the youth. 'It was very empowering as CD is my passion'.

'We did a particularly good job in saving many women and children's lives'

BACK TO MELBOURNE

Upon returning to Melbourne, I got a job with the women's Domestic Violence Crisis Services (WDVCS), the now Safe-Steps, a state-wide organisation that assists women and children escaping family violence and to live safe and free as members of our society. 'That was a big school for me. At that time family violence was like a taboo, unspoken evil that no one talked about it.'



Despite having limited resources, the team she worked with, was very dedicated to change the world and they were lucky to have a director who was also very passionate about eradicating family violence. 'I really learnt a lot! We did a particularly good job of saving many women's and children's lives.' Seven years after, Juana decided that it was time to leave WDVCS, to start decompressing from Family Violence work. 'You get accumulative stress when working in the sector and that can burn you out,' she said.

From there, Juana got a job with Family Relationship Australia where she worked for year as a mediator. Working within a team of psychologists, psychotherapists, social workers as well as working with perpetrators trying to minimise the impact of violence in a different setting away from the court. 'We helped women identifying risks and not attending court when it is risky.' Juana believes that campaigns for violence against women should be ongoing alongside other behavioural programs to educate men.

IN GERMANY...

'Once again I found my passion'

Juana's work with Family Relationship Australia had again come to a stop as her husband got a job in Germany. In Germany she worked in a voluntary capacity for the United Nations (UN). She provided online support to some UN's projects in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The online volunteer is a global organisation providing skills and expertise to communities in remote areas of developing countries. For instance, there was a community in a very remote area in Africa that wanted to build mud houses with building materials at their hands. International volunteers, such as architects, provided a building plan to build functional and sustainable mud houses. Volunteers and translators were also used to facilitate better communication. 'That was very empowering for communities in need and once again I found my passion'.

IN MYANMAR...

‘I thought, this is a very good organisation but there is no structure’

When returning to Australia, her husband got a job in Myanmar. Juana said it was very scary to live there because the military was in power then. With an undying passion for community development work, Juana worked as a Volunteer at ‘*Akahya*’, a women’s organisation in Yangon. *Akahya*’s mission to support women, victims and survivors of rapes, abuses and of any other forms of assault as these women had nowhere to get support. ‘I thought, this is a very good organisation but there is no structure!’ with help from her friend from Nicaragua who she met whilst in Yangon, they worked on the policy, the risk assessment tool and implemented new processes. They did the same work for the refugees that were being set up there. Juana also learnt to make jewellery in Yangon, and this has now become her hobby.

BACK AGAIN TO AUSTRALIA

‘Empathy cannot be taught, you either got it or not’

Upon returning to Australia last year from Myanmar, Juana got a job at the Melbourne Polytechnics. She has been teaching Community Development and enjoys it a lot. She is convinced that she has now got an opportunity to teach people about reflective practices on their attitudes, behaviour, and their interaction with clients. ‘How you think about people will drive how you interact with clients.’ In class, Juana stresses to students that it is especially important for all CD’s workers to be aware that they are working with the most vulnerable members of our society, so a *non-judgemental* approach is required to attain goals objectively. ‘You are not going to be rich when you work in this sector, it is about assisting people.’ Juana believes that ‘Empathy cannot be taught, you either got it or not!’ She believes that CD work is not about ‘helping’ it is about ‘assisting’ the client, who is the driver, and the

CD worker is like a GPS providing clients with valuable information to make informed decisions that enhance their welfare. For Juana, family violence is a preventable epidemic and she sees a lot of gaps within the new model and structure set to combat family violence. ‘Targeting root-causes of family violence is the best way to eradicate family violence rather than putting some band aid on a wound that can start bleeding any moment.’

LOOKING AT THE HORIZON...

‘This is a gap that I find within the Family Violence sector’

Juana has not hung up her boots yet in assisting women. Her deep understanding and extensive knowledge that family violence is an epidemic that has been ravaging women’s lives since time immemorial and does have damaging impacts on children and many generations to come, drives Juana to want to set up a ‘hub’. This hub that she has been dreaming about, would be an organisation supporting women following the aftermath of Family Violence crisis’. The hub will help women regain their self-trust and confidence in themselves and may prevent them from going back to the crisis and toxic environment. ‘This is a gap that I find within the Family Violence sector.’ Juana finds that after a woman has been supported by Family Violence agencies and the judiciary system there are not many services available to continue supporting them. A woman is left cut and dry and not able to decompress properly from a family violence crisis and in most cases, to which she has been subjected for years to family violence. Society expects women to be cured from the epidemic of family violence once she finds safety or once an intervention order has been put in place. Juana believes that is just the beginning of her journey. There is also emotional and psychological safety that need to be cared for. Women need a place to share a cup of coffee and to be able talk to other women about their journey. In her hub, Juana hopes to teach women some complementary skills that they can use as hobbies while weaving supportive relationships with one another. Juana said that all she needs is a place and dedicated women with their gum boots on, who are willing to work with her.

HOW-ARE-YOU
MAGAZINE

8~March

2021
HAPPY INTERNATIONAL
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A Blissful World that Heals her

After losing her brother Daniela Galcagno, a wife, and a mother of two became a reclusive, until one day she picked up her arts tools that took her to another realm where she created a masterpiece while learning to live with the loss of her brother and trying to find herself again.

FAMILY ...

A people's person, Daniela, now 55 thoroughly enjoys being around people and helping people. Daniela and her husband met when they were sixteen and have been together ever since. Julia and Max are the beautiful fruits of their union.

'You know, you can't take anything for granted'.

'It is God' s plan, a blessing and you know you can't take anything for granted. We had them late in our lives, it was a beautiful time for us and still is, but even though they challenge me a lot, I wouldn't have it any other way.' Daniela completed a Diploma in primary teaching when many schools were closing, and it was getting hard to get into teaching. She ended up working for Myer for 20 years, in the purchasing department. She met a lot of people with whom she built good friendships. She went on maternity leave for her second child, Max and started caring for her sick mother with her 4-year-old son. 'That was incredibly challenging, but I wouldn't have it any other way' she explains.

ON VOLUNTEER WORK

Now Daniela has been doing volunteer work at Greenbook Community Health Centre for approximately three years, 'Because I love it, it comes easily to me.' She teaches mosaic classes which she enjoys. 'It is an enjoyable process of problem solving when you are fitting pieces in mosaic artwork like jigsaw puzzles. The joy that it brings to people when they complete their work is just beautifully rewarding'. It is like trying to find yourself again after you were hit by a big storm. She also does some gardening with some disability groups which she says always feel rewarding, when they do pot planting. 'It is a great escape for me, the people are lovely. It is mainly a supportive and social group. We share laughter, stories, and food.

'I love being there, I really do'



HER MASTERPIECE – a combination of paper, mosaic and collage using recycled materials.

Daniela lost her brother in 2014. This sudden death of her loved one froze her passion. For three years she did nothing, could not be with people or listening to any music. 'I just became a recluse. I lost everything that I enjoyed doing.' It wasn't until she struck the chord with a lovely lady at Greenbook Community Centre who said to her 'Daniela, I see a lot in you. I'd love to see more of you.' Daniela worked there for a year filling in for someone who was on maternity leave. 'From there, she picked me up and let my fly again'. When the Whittlesea Council called for an art exhibition in 2017, she felt like her brother spoke to her that year. She lived, dreamed, and breathed about this artwork every moment. 'I just threw myself into art because it is the only thing that understood me completely. It doesn't ask questions, it just let me do'. Art is her escape. 'I was driven by this incredible force and energy that I can't even explain and completed everything in four weeks!'

'I just immerse myself into art because it is the only thing that understands me completely. It doesn't ask questions, it just let me do.'

Daniela attributes her artistic skills to her parents. 'I got a lot from parents. They never threw anything away'. She has vivid memories of when she was a child, one day she asked

her dad to buy her a nozzle, 'He went out and made one for me, just like that. I was the happiest child in the world'. That experience has been heavily embedded in her. Every item she finds is a treasure, a broken tool, jewellery, a button etc... she does not throw anything away. 'My masterpiece is made from broken pieces, lost and found, or things given to me. I don't buy anything. I value and keep things from big to miniscule. Everything has a purpose.' Daniela specialises in paper mosaic with broken jewellery. She did this artwork on a 30-year-old canvas that she made when she was at university and reused it. Everything is recycled, and 'I love the fact that I don't spend anything to produce something so beautiful for all to enjoy'. This beautiful piece is dedicated to her brother, not to win anything or get attention. It is an expression of how she felt at a time and now she says, 'My brother is free.' For Daniela, living in the dark for 3 years after losing her brother, this artwork was a turning point, a burst of light and hope, 'A new birth not only for him but for me as well'. There are just so many symbols in there, all tied in with her family. 'It just evolved and that's what really saved me from grief. This art is also the place where my brother is at the moment, a beautiful place!', she says with reassurance.

A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT TO OTHER ARTISTS

Daniela believes that there is no perfect mind frame for artists to do artwork. 'Whether you are experiencing anger, grief, joy or happiness etc... continue doing your art no matter how you feel. It should express how you are feeling at a time and art evolves itself.' Being passionately crazy for 'Alice and the Wonderland,' Daniela produced three pieces of that in 2017, all made up with broken things, toys, jewellery etc. She won the *First-Choice Award* from the City of Whittlesea. 'I am not an artist, I just love creating,' she says humbly.

'Just be true to yourself and love what you do. Art must be heartfelt'



WOMEN IN ARTWORLD

For Daniela, art is not about making a statement. ***'Just be true to yourself and love what you do. Art must be heartfelt. Art reflects mood which is subjected to changes, so are artistic ideas and the energy that fuels artwork also changes. It's never the same. That is the beauty of art.'***

NURTURING SOUL

Doing art is not only fulfilling but helps Daniela by generating millions of art ideas that she would love to do. She thrives being around people to make a positive impact and enjoys being at an exhibition, getting different responses from people about what they see in her artwork. 'I get a big kick out of that because everyone has got such a different interpretation from mine.'



My photographer

Shida Pourlotfi was born in Iran where she completed a Bachelor of Psychology. She has extensive skills in photography from owning her own photography business. She harnesses her psychological skills to build a rapport with people to capture the moment and the essence of people with images that tell stories.

Do you want your lively and captivating pictures taken?

Please contact Shida on:

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Email: shidarcrd@yahoo.com

Instagram: [instagram.com/shadi_photography80](https://www.instagram.com/shadi_photography80)



[*sisterworks.org.au*](https://sisterworks.org.au)

Read more about the incredible work by SisterWorks on page 28



SisterWorks

Interview | Part 1: Women

SisterWorks is a Social Enterprise founded in 2013, currently operating in Melbourne and Bendigo. SisterWorks supports Migrant Refugees and Asylum Seekers women (MRAW) in Victoria in improving their confidence, mental wellbeing, and economic participation. It paves pathways to education, employment, and entrepreneurship for the most vulnerable MRAW in Victoria. SisterWorks generates positive social return on investment (SROI) for women, volunteers, customers, and the Government. Every \$1 invested generates approximately \$2.40 revenue of social, economic, and cultural value (Annual Report, 2019). In this Part 1 of the interviews, the Chief Operating Officer (COO), Ifrin Fottock, talks to us about how women could access SisterWorks' Learning and Development (L&D) programs.

Q1. Your target are women from Migrant, Refugee and Asylum Seeker backgrounds (MRAW) regardless of their cultural, religious, ethnic, or racial background and whether they are educated or uneducated. Does Sisterworks have any plan to include first nation's ladies into its programs?

Ifrin: We want to welcome everyone including our first nation ladies. It is about capacity and priorities. We know that migrant, refugees, and asylum seekers women are our priority because they come to this country and have no one. It is a about priority and criticality of MRAW. Ultimately SisterWorks would love to empower all women. The door is open for our first nation ladies and they come in from time to time, but they leave soon after realising that this is not for them. MRAW face a lot of social barriers when they just arrive in Australia. The sooner we break these barriers the less they will be isolated or depressed. SisterWorks is an early intervention program.

Q2. What level of English does a woman need to enrol Sisterworks' activities?

Ifrin: There is no pre-requisite about the level of English that a sister needs to access our programs. Some women who come here could only say 'Hello' and 'Thank you'. However, we conduct friendly interviews and digital assessment when a woman contacts SisterWorks to

determine her capacity level and the learning speed. Women with basic English could have a shorter journey in our L&D. Through these assessments, we determine their level of literacy and English language as well technology knowledge because everything is on Apps these days. So, being able to navigate technology through different gadgets is crucial. SisterWorks' L&D consists of three programs -Vocational (such as sewing, cooking) -Entrepreneurship and Digital learning. For women with little English, we have 'Learning by doing', learning useful English language related to the activity they are doing. We are not training them to be Shakespeare, but we just want them to relate the language to their activity.

'We want to welcome everyone including our first nation ladies'

Q3. Do you have interpreting services for women with no or little English language?

Ifrin: We use 'WhatsApp' to communicate our L&D programs. We show them basic skills on how to download an Apps, and digitally communicate. We also encourage them to give us a call if they cannot type and we verbally inform women about various activities in our L&D programs. For instance, Fridays we run wellbeing classes and with COVID-19, we invite women to participate via webinar.

Q4. Your annual report states that for every dollar (\$1) a woman invests, she gets \$2.40, is that right? How long does it take for a woman to develop a label for a product and start earning income?

Ifrin: It depends on their capacity to learn. Some learn faster, some might be a bit slow. For instance, a sister who has some basic sewing skills will pass the first level and move to the next one and eventually start making some of our products but not all, learn at the same pace. She then moves into an intermediate program whereby she could make some products such as a bread's bag, lunch box and learning about other fabrics, not just cotton. If they can make say a face mask in an hour and it is cut to precision, they are rewarded and from there, they can only get better and better, making 2 to 3 masks in an hour. The economic empowerment kicks in,

it is a learning process requiring practice and hard work. We believe in economic empowerment through our L&D program. Women would probably not be able to buy a house with what they earn, but they have some discretionary income enabling them to take their kids to movies or McDonalds. We also have another category of sisters who earn good income based on their highperformance level. We do not force them but encourage them to do their best. You are only going to scare them away if forcing them. Another category are sisters who are determined to work hard and put the product in the shop within a short period of time.





‘The needs of migrant, refugee and asylum seeker women are not solved by the length of time they have been living in Australia’

Q6. Can you tell me about these women, what is the average length of time they have been living in Australia and what do you think motivates them to use your programs?

Ifrin: It varies, we have sisters who have been living in Australia for the last 10 years, other have just arrived, meaning from a few days to 10 years and over. The needs of migrant, refugee and asylum seeker women are not solved by the length of time they have been living in Australia. We therefore welcome everyone regardless of how long they have been in Australia.

Q7. I know that partnering with other support organisations is useful as some women have complex issues that are outside the scope of your business but can only be resolved by specialised organisations such as Safe-Steps, Beyond Blue etc... Do you have stakeholders’ engagement program to refer women in such situation and vice-versa? How do people know about your programs?

Ifrin: We use different means. We partner with organisations in line with our mission statement. For instance, Asylum Seekers Resources Centre is our partner and refers a lot of our clients to us. We work collaboratively with Social Workers, Carrington Adult Education Centre, Fitzroy Learning Centre to find comprehensive solutions to women’s issues. Furthermore, word of mouths as well as other sisters bring along their friends to our programs.

We were planning to set up a satellite SisterWorks in Dandenong area, but we abandoned the plan due to the high cost for setting up. The other option is to cohabite with other organisations. Dandenong is now a mobile satellite hub where we run cooking classes. We are trying to partner with Springvale Learning Centre, which already has the targeted community we need. From now on, this is the model we are adopting, a mobile L&D programs in partnership with local organisations using local volunteers to run our programs. We appreciate the City of Greater Dandenong which provided us with some grant support to run cooking activities. To be continued ...



Q5. Joumana’s story is impressive! How does a woman sustain her start-up business to survive once she graduates from your program?

Ifrin: We try to equip women with the necessary skills to start their business while they are learning with us. We have many sisters who are running online businesses successfully. We have an entrepreneurship program, and we understand that not everybody is creative or has some artistic blood in them.

For this category of women, we support them to create labels for our products. If they chose to sell their products in our shops, they are then fitted for the entrepreneurship program. They learn multidimensional skills such as sewing, crochet and jewellery making, building up their artistic skills. Our L&D programs range from levels 1 to 3. When a woman reaches level 3, she then progresses to the category of entrepreneurship if she wishes to do so. We assign her with a designer and a business mentor helping her to align her products with current market demand and environmental values. Our mentoring program assists sisters in cost analysis

and price management. We also give them an opportunity to sell products through our stores or other channels. Products that do not sell within six months are deemed ‘False hope’ and discontinued. While women are in our programs, we help them as much as we can with practical knowledge in setting up a business and marketing. For instance, when a woman is ready to go online, we assist her in taking some good pictures of her products and marketing them. You will need to take some risk to go out there and work hard to be successful. In addition, we also partner with Brotherhood of St Laurence and encourage our cohort to participate in an 8-week business course run by Brotherhood of St Laurence.

‘We try to equip women with the necessary skills to start their business while they are learning with us’

Please stay tuned for **Part 2** on this amazing organisation, in our next edition. Meanwhile, if you would like to get in touch with Sisterworks, please visit www.sisterworks.org.au



Fitness to a Tee

Teurai or simply 'Tee', originally from Zimbabwe was trained in London as a lawyer but did not have her heart in the court room. Instead, her passion in helping people improving their wellbeing took her on an amazing journey where she won various body builder's medals.


Are you wanting to enhance your wellbeing?

Please get in touch with Tee.

Web: www.fitnessstoatee.com.au/workoutwithtee
Email: fitness@fitnessstoatee.com.au
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