

How-Are-You

Issue No.2
July/2021

'Sometimes there are no easy solutions to human problems. That is when I dance! Dancing out on the stage is healing.'

'I was a good nurse and was happy with my job back home.'

'This is close to my heart, it is my passion, and I won't give up.'

**MIGRANT WOMEN
CHANGE
TRACKS FOR
WHAT
MATTERS
MOST TO THEM**

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.

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'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 herself, 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 refugees' backgrounds authentically share their compelling life stories to inform, educate, empower, and invigorate 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 services to Culturally and Linguistic Diverse women's communities (CALD).

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 and collaborating).

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 relationship.

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

Against the backdrop of today's turbulent global pandemic (COVID-19) spawning various socioeconomics challenges, How-Are-You magazine focuses on building a healthy society by bringing an understanding of the challenging issues of intersectionality between gender, ethnicity, and its socioeconomic impact. We aim to:

Build bridges of understanding between women from migrant and refugees' backgrounds and the rest of the society.

- Provide an in-depth understanding of settlement challenges that women from migrant and refugees' backgrounds face, to inform decision makers and to enhance service provision fostering social cohesion in our society.
- Build capacity of women through stakeholders' partnerships delivering specific trainings and workshops tailored to women's needs aiming to enhance civic and economic participation as well as social health.
- Build capacity through our internship program to aspiring magazine's writers, editors, and journalists. How-Are-You is a platform for coaching and mentoring emerging artists who will work closely with our L&D program's team.
- Celebrate success stories of women from migrant and refugees' backgrounds who have made positive impact in our society and/or shattered glass ceilings in every sector.
- Uncover hidden talents of most marginalised and vulnerable women from migrant and refugees' backgrounds of our society assisting them in accessing employment.
- Actively contribute to enhancing best service delivery models for women from migrant and refugees' 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 lifelong learner who enjoys learning and continuously developing herself academically, professionally and in many ways she can. She successfully completed Master of Business Administration (MBA), a Postgrad in Business Administration, a Postgrad in Economics, and Bachelor's degree in Humanities (BA. Hum), all in Australia. A Former Chairperson for 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).

Her passion to assist women started early on during her work placement at a maternity and childcare 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 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'. In addition, Chantal has extensive knowledge and expertise in property management through her career.

'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.



Shida Purlotfi

Shida Purlotfi was born in Iran where she completed a Bachelor of Psychology. An entrepreneur from having successfully owned some photography business in Iran. She harnesses her psychological skills to build rapport with people capturing the moment and the essence of people with vivid images that tell stories.

In Melbourne, Shida has been helping refugees and asylum seekers from Iran and is in the process of establishing Northern Iranian Community (nic) organisation. She recently started working as a Real Estate agent trainee. Shida joined How-Are-you magazine in 2018. She continuously enjoys developing herself whilst helping 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.

Welcome to How-Are-You Magazine

EDITOR'S NOTE

' Welcome to our Second Issue!

We are all aware that the unprecedented global pandemic COVID-19 produces some weary, and sometimes cathartic effects on most of us. It is important to be gentle with yourself and with one another and appreciate what we have rather than dwelling on the loss. Gratitude produces positive effects on both physical, and emotional wellbeing. It enhances motivation for better engagement.'

' Winter is souring on this side of our world. It is time for some yummy soups, thick socks and perhaps a good book. Tokyo Olympic has been brightening up the world if you enjoy watching competitive sport. Excellent work to Ariarne Titmus, our Australian swimmer for winning the Gold Medal in 400m freestyle for women swimming! '

' In this issue, How-Are-You Magazine brings you amazing women who share their stories about how they successfully changed tracks of their career in pursuing their authentic call. Agnes Nsofwa originally from Zambia, become a sickle cell crusader when she found out that her daughter was sick with this illness. Despite having an established career in banking industry, Agnes was so determined to save her little one, she enrolled in a nursing course and founded Australia Sickle Cell Advocacy (ASCA) and has been on the road ever since as the ambassador for sickle cell.'

' On the other hand, Teurai Chanakira who was born in Zimbabwe but grew up in the UK only to realise that the only reason she became an accomplished lawyer was to fulfill her father's dream. After a serie of life storms, she realised that 'Law' was not at core of her being and yearned to be a personal fitness trainer. As Joan Didion puts it:

The willingness to accept responsibility for one's own life is the source from which self-respect springs... to free us from the expectations of others, to give us back to ourselves — there lies the great, the singular power of self-respect.'

Upon arriving in Australian Teurai embarked on her dream and has been a successful personal fitness trainer and a holistic health and wellbeing coach. She also went on to write some books.

Travelling far East, we enter India, the country where Sanchita Abrol originally came from. Sanchita successfully manages to follow her authentic call of becoming a classical dancer and simultaneously completing university studies in public policy in Melbourne.

Like life on purpose movement puts it, the common thread in the stories of these women is ' ...And she realises that a fresh start was hers for the taking, that she could be the woman she is always seen on the distant horizon – her future self. One step at a time. Starting today'.

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



Passion For Nursing

Always feels at home in Hospital

Nursing at the core of her being, Inaam Jerjis, a mother of two and a grandmother of three, had unyielding faith and courage to flee the Iraq war and come to Australia, which she now calls home. She is currently finding her way into nursing.

Fleeing the Iraq war

'Separating from my husband of 23 years, was the hardest thing that I have ever gone through in my life'.

Leaving her parents and siblings behind, Inaam, now 55, had no choice but to flee the bloody war that was simmering in Iraq in 1989. With her husband and their two boys they sought refuge in Jordan. After retraining in nursing, which was her career in her home country, Inaam got a job as a nurse again in a private hospital in Amman, Jordan. 'I worked as a nurse for over 10 years in Jordan until we left. The people I worked with were good people'. Despite having worked full time, the money was not enough to cover all living costs as well as medical expenses for her family. 'I got another job to help out with the cost of living. It was very hard, but I kept going, kept going...'. The financial struggle she was experiencing in Jordan was compounded with marital problems. Inaam believed that her husband changed a lot after they arrived in Jordan. 'He was getting difficult to live with'. She tried very hard to keep her 23 years of marriage but, in the end, she had to let him go. 'Separating from my husband was the hardest thing I have ever gone through in my life'. She became depressed following the separation but could never contemplate returning to her home country. Inaam and her two children lived in Jordan for about 11 years, but Inaam never really felt at home within herself.

My Parish, My family

A staunch Catholic, Inaam visited a Parish a few months after she arrived in Melbourne, where she found her second home. 'The church was a very safe place for me.' I asked the parish priest how I could learn English. Inaam was guided to attend mass and the 'Alpha Course' which is run by the parish once a year for 10 weeks. Despite her lack of English, Inaam attended the course. 'I sat in the corner because I was so scared, and people came to greet me and asked me questions in English. I could barely understand or answer some of the questions they asked me. When the video for the Alpha course was turned on, I left and ran because it was so hard for me to understand.' The following week, Inaam went back to attend the course and from then on, she decided to learn English and to refrain from mixing with her compatriots so that she would practise English. Inaam yearned to work so she could start a fresh good life in Australia, but she was exhausted, depressed, sad and had no English language. She continued attending mass at the Parish. 'People were very friendly and welcoming. They would ask me how I was. This did not happen in churches in Jordan.' She felt respected and heard at the parish. 'Respect is very important for me.' Inaam learnt a lot of her English language through the parish, and she is grateful to her parishioner friend who has been there for her ever since she joined the parish. 'My good friend visits me regularly, cooks for me and spends a lot of time with me. She is like an angel for me.' Inaam is also grateful to her two sons who encouraged her to do things on her own so she could learn English. 'I am grateful for having God in my life because He always brings good people into my life'. At the parish, Inaam is a very active member of many groups, she sings in the choir, helps with the Alpha course and gives out communion. She is an active member of the Welcoming Committee, and she visits the sick in hospital with other parishioners. 'I like helping out' explains Inaam.

Immigration Visa to Australia

'I saw a lot of bad things happen to people in Iraq because I worked in a hospital. Many people were injured, and many died'.

'I always wanted to go to Australia. I never thought of any other country but Australia.' When the war between Iraq & Kuwait ceased, Inaam could not let her sons join the army which was mandatory for boys. 'All my life I grew up in wars. There was also the war between Iraq and Iran in 1991 and I feared for my family that was left behind. I saw a lot of bad things happen to people in Iraq because I worked in a hospital, in the emergency department. Many were injured and many died.' In Iraq, 96% to 99% of people who join the army go to war. If they come back, they struggle to cope with normal life and many commit suicide or suffer severe mental health problems. For Inaam, leaving Iraq was the best decision she made in the hope of giving her children a safe and better future. Her visa application to Australia was refused four times, but 'I had no other way but kept applying and the fourth time my application was approved, Thank God!'



Job hunting

'I was a good nurse and was happy with my job back home and always felt at home in a hospital'.

Some difficulties that Inaam encountered in finding a nursing job also contributed to her depression. For Inaam, finding a job is like starting a new life. 'All my life I worked in operating theatres, I studied and worked. So, I miss that a lot. I get a lot of happiness from helping people who are sick and seeing them get better fulfils me.' She spent all her life working in hospitals ever since she could remember. 'I was a good nurse and was happy with my job back home and always felt at home in a hospital'. However, Inaam has not yet been able to go back to nursing because her qualifications are not recognised in Australia. At one time, Inaam got a PCA job but could not work because after one day of training she felt that she lost so much. So, she did not go back, which she said, she regrets today. 'Now I realise that it was a big mistake I should have continued'. Her passion for nursing brought her into doing some volunteer work at the Royal Melbourne Hospital working in reception. 'It was a very good experience and when I am in hospital, I always feel at home because that is my home.' She also volunteered at the Northern Hospital. Inaam tried to set up a beauty therapy business at home when she lived in a two-bedroom apartment but could not continue when she moved to a one-bedroom apartment to cut down on rental costs.

Inaam hopes to find a job in pathology for which she has just completed a course. 'It was difficult, but I finished!', she said victoriously. 'I really want to work because I feel alive, happy and empowered when I work!' From time to time, Inaam gets some financial help from her sons but she doesn't ask because she understands that they must live their lives as well. She feels that she is the one who is supposed to help them. 'I am their mum. I must help them. They need my help!'



Happy Family's Memories

'Every Friday in Iraq I took my sister to the fish shop. We bought fresh fish, cooked and enjoyed a meal together in each other's company. Every time I feel down, I call her up and we talk. I wish my sister would come here but it is hard. We call each other a lot now. We are blessed in this country, and I pray for Australia to be safe. I will die here and not anywhere else. I trust God. He helps me a lot.'

Grateful living in Australia

'There is still a lot of sadness within me, a lot, but I know that nothing is for free. I have to pay a lot and make sacrifices to give my children a better life'.

Inaam lost a lot because of the war. 'The war took everything we had'. She separated from her family, friends, lost her nursing career and her marriage. 'We have to learn everything, the language, the culture. It is very hard!' she lamented. Inaam believes in having good people around her because they give her good positive advice, information and support. She attributes having good people around her to God. 'I believe God helps me a lot, I couldn't do it alone. I have a lot of good friends who help me a lot.' Inaam would like to do something good for Australia as a tribute to Australia, her now beloved country. However right now she is not yet sure what it is. 'This country gave me peace, jobs for my sons and a lot of good things.' Her brother and his family also joined her in Australia a couple of years ago and are settling in fine. Inaam wishes she came to Australia earlier because she would have more time to do good things for the country. 'But it is not too late. Now I will get a job in pathology and will keep learning English to get better and better.' She also learns a lot English from her grandchildren. 'There is still a lot of sadness within me, a lot, but I know that nothing is for free. I have to pay a lot and make sacrifice to give my children a better life'.

Jobs Victoria Advocates can help you find work by connecting you to local support and training.

WHAT ARE JOBS VICTORIA ADVOCATES?

Jobs Victoria Advocates support people who are looking for work by connecting them to information, advice, and the right services.

There are more than 100 Jobs Victoria Advocates working in local communities across Victoria.

HOW CAN A JOBS VICTORIA ADVOCATE HELP YOU?

If you're looking for work, a Jobs Victoria Advocate can help get you started.

- We can connect you with skills and training through Work and Learning Centres, TAFE Skills and Jobs Centres, and apprenticeships.
- We can help you apply for jobs through the Jobs Victoria Hub.
- If you need more support, we can link you to a Jobs Victoria Partner who can provide hands-on support such as CV and interview skills, and then help you find a job.

ABOUT JOBS VICTORIA

Jobs Victoria:

- supports people looking for work
- connects jobseekers with skills and training
- matches businesses with local workers
- creates jobs for those who need them most.

We support Victorian jobseekers and employers in person, online and over the phone.

Hotline: 1300 208 575
Email: info@jobs.vic.gov.au
Website: jobs.vic.gov.au

WHERE ARE JOBS VICTORIA ADVOCATES?

Jobs Victoria Advocates are working in communities across the state in regional and metropolitan Melbourne.

They meet with people in community spaces such as libraries, sports clubs and shopping centres to make sure everyone knows about resources available to help them find a job.

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL JOBS VICTORIA ADVOCATE

Whittlesea Community Connections

jobadvocates@whittleseacc.org.au

03 9401 6666



Are you Looking for a Job? Do you need Support?



Help Is Here

Job Victoria Advocate at Whittlesea Community Connections and Whittlesea Womenhood Association are hosting a job advisory session together to provide information about how they can support and navigate pathways to employment.

1

Help with
resume writing

2

Learn local- free
non-accredited
courses-2021

3

Your queries
and our
responses



Join us on Thursday, 9th September at 1:00-2:30pm on Zoom.

Please email at ssehgal@whittleseacc.org.au or contact us on
9401 6666 to register



❁ *The Power of Dancing* ❁

When the magnitude and intensity of socio-economic problems in remote areas of India become overwhelming, Sanchita Abrol, a Public Policy Specialist and an Indian classical dancer, dances them out with hope that someday the basic needs for each human being will be fulfilled.

Sanchita, an intersectionality between public services and dancing

An outstanding accomplished Indian classical dancer, Sanchita is also a Public Policy Specialist (PPS). After completing a Bachelor of Commerce at Lady Shri Ram, a highly reputable university in New Delhi, Sanchita arrived in Australia in 2014. She successfully completed her Master's degree in Public Policy at University of Melbourne in 2015. 'It was such a good experience. I was exposed to so many cultures and the Australian policy structure is so different from the Indian structure.' Whilst at university, Sanchita worked for Save the Children Australia and CBHP for a small project in India on behalf of the University of Melbourne. Sanchita also travelled back and forth to India to perform with her Guru's dance group. 'Dancing satisfies my inner soul and simultaneously enhances the wellbeing of people who witness the power of dance.' She got married in 2016 in India to her now, lovely lawyer husband whom she met while studying at the University of Melbourne.

Challenges

'Many dancers, are struggling to live a comfortable life'

Sanchita believes that the challenges she encounters emanate from how to make her performances understood by different spectators from different backgrounds. 'There are some differences between Australian and Indian spectators. 'In Australia, people are not aware of my dance. Without that awareness, it is difficult to understand its intricacies at times.' Performing in India, the environment is different and Sanchita enjoys the push to be more creative. 'Some perceive dance as a source of entertainment. But it is much more than that. It is a spiritual journey.' Moreover, classical dances such as Kathak are rather expensive artforms which require a lot of expenses for costume, rehearsals, music, venue and make up which sometimes people forget. 'Many dancers, are struggling to live a comfortable life.'

'The deep Meaning of my dance.'

Through her dance, Sanchita revives and promotes the very remote and peripheral cultures that is about to be washed away by the wave of globalisation which she believes leads to 'homogenisation.' 'Through my Kathak dance, I try and protect the very essence of these cultures. Peripheral cultures are found everywhere, even in Australia'. Sanchita is known for her thematic productions. Her one such critically acclaimed production was based on a 'Soldier's life' which incorporated the emotional and expressive connotation as well as the technical dimensions to the dance. This dance drama was based on the poetry by a very renowned Indian Air Force Officer.

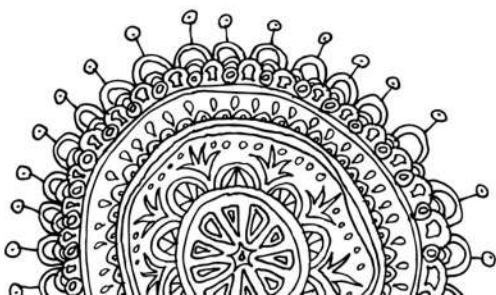
Becoming a dancer

'That was the day I decided that I want to learn from her'

Even though no one in her immediate family was a dancer, Sanchita knew within herself that she was a dancer. She realized that she had always been a dancer when she made her very first dancing movement at an early age. She won many competitions at both district and state's level and performed at the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Asia Sammelan. Despite being born into a very academic family, a paediatrician oncologist father and a mother who is a teacher of chemistry, both parents were very supportive of Sanchita learning classical dancing while she was also studying. Sanchita is a 'Kathak dancer.' 'Kathak' means 'Storytelling' in Hindi, a very ancient Indian classical dance form. The earliest reference to Kathak community can be traced back to the 3rd and 4th BC Sanskrit verses.

At the age of five, while watching her elder sister learning Indian classical dance, Sanchita became lost in the waves of Indian classical dance. This later moulded her into an outstanding performer. One day Guru Shovana Narayana, one of the most revered dancers came to perform in Sanchita's hometown, 'that was the day I decided that I wanted to learn from her.' With her parents' support, Sanchita travelled from her hometown to New Delhi to attend dance's classes taught by Guru Narayana while studying her year 11 and 12 at the same time. Despite such a heavy study load, the very busy and demanding dance classes and actively participating in dancing competitions, Sanchita achieved 95% in year 12 and got into Lady Shri Ram, a prestigious University in New Delhi. 'Dance came naturally, I lived every part of it and could see that it was coming to me very naturally. I felt very comfortable in my very own technics.' Sanchita became a member of her Guru's dance repertory group at a very young age. She was also doing some community development work in the rural areas of India at the same time.

In 2018 Sanchita founded 'Kathaprana' meaning 'the life of the story' in Hindi, a dance company which she now runs in Blackburn, Melbourne Australia. Classes are also available online. She incorporates world's literature including Australian cultural works into her teaching. In 2010, she performed at the Commonwealth Games in New Delhi. 'I felt a great sense of pride, welcoming people from all over the world through our artform and representing my country.' Internationally, Sanchita has performed in Hungary, Latvia, London, and Germany. In 2018, she performed at the Indian Summer Festival held at Melbourne Cricket Ground which was supported by Multicultural Arts Victoria (MAV). In 2019 she performed at the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne. In 2020, she performed at the Nrithya Sangamam organised by Times of India. In 2021, Sanchita also performed for the prestigious Sangeet Natak Akademi, India.



Sanchita explains why people dance...

'If you want to understand dancing, remain still, if you want to understand stillness, dance' - Rumi

Sanchita defines dancing as a mirror, a portal, a window to connect with the Superpower up there. 'You connect with your nature; for instance, you could, express how a butterfly would sit on a flower or how a flower opens up.' It is a form of meditation and a cleansing at the same time. As a mirror, dancing is a medium through which she expresses all gamut of feelings: anger, joy, cheerfulness, indifference, fear, love, surprise, disappointment, loss, chaos, or happiness etc... 'There are not a lot of mediums that can let you exhale any kind of these feelings that you might have at any point in time. Dancing just does that and very well'. For Sanchita dancing is as a necessity as is food. She dances every day. 'The day I haven't danced you would get to know it, I feel annoyed'. Dancing is at the core of her being. As Rumi says: 'If you want to understand dancing remain still, if you want to understand stillness, dance.' Sanchita feels calmness, wholeness, and stillness when she is dancing. 'You don't have to be physically moving to dance, you can be still and calm emotionally but dancing in your heart, mind and soul.' This duality between stillness and movement is constant and present at all times, when you are one with your dancing.'



Inspiration & Aspiration

A beautiful story, cultural identity, socio-economic issue such as 'children forced into marriage, dowry etc...' fuels Sanchita's dances. Sanchita recently did a piece on women's empowerment, based on a true story from the land of Rajasthan. Though people are living 'modern life', Sanchita believes that there are still a lot of unresolved issues that are part of our everyday human life.

Women's Role in the dancing World

'Women are already doing so much. Women are the past, present, and future of the world. The only thing I tell everyone is not to be afraid of making mistakes. We need to make mistakes and learn from them. Gaining our individuality and confidence is essential.' Sanchita urges women dancers to be aware that dancing is about believing in yourself. 'Believe in yourself and use your complete body, mind and spirit and put them to work in a given space and time.' Sometimes, the ongoing relationship between the guru and the shishya (teacher – student) might not assist the student in finding her own creative dancing technics. Students can lose their own authentic dance. 'Put your own essence, your own idea, no one wants to see someone else's perfection in you. People are happier to see your imperfections. All you need is to believe in yourself'.

Women from Migrant and Refugee backgrounds that are dancers

'A balance between Modernity and Essence'

As a strong advocate for cultural diversity, Sanchita reminds women from migrant and refugee backgrounds that their cultural identity should be reflected in their work. Concerned with the slow disappearance of the 'essence for the true art form' due to rapid globalisation, she calls on women dancers to 'take your state, region and country with you on the stage from which we could all learn so much'. The meaning behind the gestures, emotions are disappearing into a blank canvas. 'You can be the best performer, but you may lose your identity. Therefore, a balance should be maintained between modernity and the true essence of why we are doing it'

Comfortable both as a dancer and as Public Policy Officer

Sanchita travels back and forth to India following her passion for dancing and her work as a PPS. She feels equally conformable on a stage as a performer and in a field as a Public Policy Specialist and believes that these two realms are interconnected. While on a field trip as a PPS, she can sometimes be overwhelmed with so many socio-economic issues which faces one family or one person. 'Sometimes there are no easy solutions to human problems, that is when I dance! Dancing out on the stage is healing, I share and grow at the same time. I work as a PPS for people, and I dance for myself.' As a PPS, Sanchita feels like she is enhancing the welfare of the most vulnerable people in her community, which is very fulfilling for her.

<http://www.sanchitaabrol.com>

Instagram: [sanchita abrol](https://www.instagram.com/sanchita_abrol)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/sanchitaabrolofficial>





INDIAN CUISINE

Indian Cooking
Easier
and
Quicker



1. Making rice in rice cooker

Ingredients

- 1 cup Basmati Rice
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds (optional)
- Salt
- 1 ¼ water
- Chopped coriander

Cooking process

Thoroughly and nicely wash the rice and keep it soak in cold water for at least half hour. Throw the water out and put the rice in the rice cooker, add 1 ¼ water cumin seeds and some salt. Cover and cook. Once the rice is cooked remove the rice pot from the cooker. Let it remain cover for five minutes. Remove the cover. Move the spoon in the cooked rice to prevent lumps from forming. Garnish with coriander.



2. Green masala paste

Ingredients

- 1 bunch of wash well coriander roots
- 2 green chili or more as per taste
- 4 pods of garlic
- 30 grams of ginger

Cooking process

Blend all the ingredients in a blender with a small quantity of water.

3. Okra veggie

- 250 grams of frozen okra
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste or fresh tomatoes
- 1 teaspoon cumin powder
- 1 teaspoon turmeric powder
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- 1 teaspoon of coriander powder
- 1 finely chopped green chili (optional)
- 1 teaspoon curry leaves (optional)
- 2 teaspoon green masala paste
- Half medium size finely chopped onion
- 1 tablespoon oil
- Lemon juice
- Salt
- Coriander to garnish

Cooking process

Heat a round bottom pan on a stove, pour some oil. Add some cumin seeds, onion, and salt, sauté it. Add green masala paste, mix that in well. Add some turmeric, cumin, and coriander powder. Add curry leaves and green chili. Mix all the ingredients and sauté for a minute. Add okra and cook for five minutes on a high flame. Reduce the flame and cook for another ten minutes. Add lemon juice. Garnish with coriander.





4. Roti

Ingredients

3 pieces of weet bix
150 grams of whole wheat flour/ 50 grams for dusting purpose/ Plain flour will also be fine.
1 teaspoon turmeric powder.
2 teaspoons kasuri methi (or any fresh or dry herbs of your choice).
1 teaspoon of oil.
Salt to taste.
150 ml of water or a little more.
Ghee or butter to apply on the roti (optional).
Rolling pin flat surface and iron girdle pan or nonstick pan.

Cooking process

Take a round bottom pan add weet bix and some water to soften the weet bix. Add wheat flour, salt turmeric kasuri methi. Add water little by little and mix all the ingredients well to make a nice dough. Apply oil and let it rest for twenty minutes. Oil helps in cleaning any remnants of dough remaining on the pan. Make small balls. Dust it with dry flour. Roll it in any shape you want. Heat the iron girdle pan. Put the roti on the pan. When you see bubbles on the roti turn and cook on the other side. It will take around one minute to cook one roti. Apply butter or ghee.

Tips

Bottled tomatoes paste taste better than can tomato paste or tube. If you can't find red chili powder, finely chopped green chili work well. You can add any veggie of your choice in paneer cauliflower or capsicum. If you do not have all the ingredients, just cook with whatever you have. Cut the paneer and onion the way you want. You can add a one teaspoon of plain flour to the paneer when it is boiling to help thicken the curry.



5. Paneer curry

Ingredients

250 grams readymade paneer
Half medium size of finely chopped onion
1 teaspoon cumin powder
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
1 teaspoon coriander powder
1 teaspoon turmeric powder
2 teaspoons green masala
2 teaspoons tomato paste/ or fresh tomatoes
1 teaspoon red chili powder(optional)
50 grams frozen peas (optional)
1 tablespoon oil
2-liter full cream milk
Salt

Cooking process

Cut paneer into cube form and boil it for ten minutes in plain water. Drain it and put it aside. It is done to soften the paneer. Heat the pan, adds oil and cumin seeds, onion, and salt, sauté for two minutes. Then add green masala paste turmeric, cumin, and coriander powder, sauté it again. Add tomato paste and red chili powder, mix all the ingredients well then add the paneer mix it well. Add milk and let it boil and then add peas cook for five min-



Sickle Cell Ambassador

After finding out that her daughter was born with Sickle Cell disease, Agnes Nsofwa, a mother of four and a warrior, determined to give her daughter, a second chance. Agnes changed her career from a banker to a nurse. A crusader of Sickle Cell, she founded Australia Sickle Cell Advocacy (ASCA), relentlessly advocating, and raising awareness about this unspoken disease to save lives.

Originally from Zambia, and a mother of four, Agnes Nsofwa landed in Perth in 2004, accompanying her husband who came to study accounting. Upon her husband completing the course, they successfully applied for permanent residency and citizenship. 'Coming from a very threatening and lonely space, the journey hasn't been easy'. After giving birth to her fourth child, Agnes knew within herself that there was something wrong with her daughter. Her daughter was diagnosed with sickle cell when she was 14 months. 'Then I didn't know what sickle cell was and could not even spell the name correctly'. The day her mother-in-law arrived in Australia for a visit, was the day her daughter was admitted in hospital. 'For me, knowledge is power'. I told my mother-in-law that I will study medicine. I need to know what this illness is.' Her daughter was hospitalised for approximately 6-8 weeks, a very stressful time for the family and a time which brought big changes to her family.



Photo ASCA

Nursing School

'I got frustrated and lonely as I did not understand. I grieved for almost five years.'

With a business degree, Agnes was comfortably working in a bank at the time. She started reading about sickle cell when her daughter was diagnosed with it. 'I got frustrated and lonely as I did not understand. I grieved for almost five years.' Eventually she managed to accept the situation and opened a Facebook page in 2014. 'Studying to be a doctor with four children would be very demanding and would take too long at that stage of my life', thought Agnes. To be more realistic, Agnes did a quick manoeuvre and enrolled in nursing at the University of Sydney. 'I studied sickle cell a lot and took it as a topic for one of my assignments and got a high distinction for it'. Agnes completed her Master's degree in nursing in 2015.

Founding Australia Sickle Cell Advocacy Inc (ASCA)

'People are not even aware whether they carry that gene and would go through too much with this illness.'

The suffering of her daughter was an impetus to founding ASCA. Agnes 's daughter went through all types of sickles cell's management including blood transfusion and earlier this year, she underwent a bone marrow transplant. Through Facebook's interaction, Agnes felt that sickles cell should be an everyday talk and work topic. She believes that it is important to talk to patients, asking them what they lack, what they need and how are they are affected by the illness. 'People are not even aware whether they carry that gene, they would go through too much with this illness.' As the number of followers on her face book page kept growing, Agnes founded ASCA which was successfully launched on the 19th June 2019, the International Day for Sickle Cell, at the Melbourne Royal Children Hospital. 'I am very appreciative of my husband. He has been instrumental in supporting the project all the way. The hospital has also been so good to us.'

Some Challenges along the way

'This is close to my heart, it is my passion, and I won't give up'

Along the journey, Agnes learnt to be patient and understands she must 'Never give up' as rejection is part of the journey. When her daughter was sick in hospital Agnes juggled between motherhood, being a carer and a full-time worker. With her husband working interstate, she had to leave hospital to drop off and pick her other children up from school. 'Having a sick child, makes it so hard to close your eyes and pretend that sickle cell does not exist'. ASCA has been strongly advocating for the implementation of a mandatory newborn screening for sickle cell disease, to detect if the baby is born with sickle cell. This will make it easy for clinicians to start treating early to avoid complications like what happened to her daughter.

Early intervention would save not only resources but would also prevent patients from attending hospital numerous times due to different complications. This is also a better way to have correct data about carriers of sickle cell. ASCA is also appealing for more research into the illness, the education of clinicians on policy guidelines and for more resources from the government, private sector, and other NGOs. When her daughter was 26 months, she had pneumonia. When they took the fluid out of her lung, some air was trapped inside when they closed that up too soon, she ended up having surgery resulting in taking out part of her lung'. 'Sickle cell is a manageable disease and people can live with it, but early detection is essential to avoid complications.' 'This is close to my heart; it is my passion, and I won't give up'.

ASCA's Vision

Agnes and her team have successfully rolled out ASCA into other major Australian States (NSW, QLD, SA, WA) within 3 years of registering ASCA. We are continuously collecting data on sickle cell while shining the light on sickle cell disease. In addition, Agnes has also been working on an upcoming forum of approximately 30-50 women focusing on women's health. Agnes encourages women to be 'The Voice' that talks about illnesses and other things that affect women to empower other women and be a role model to young kids. 'Don't just complain, do something about it to positively contribute to our Australian society'. Agnes reminds women that change, start with 'You'. 'Believe in your dreams and explore how you might do things differently from traditional ways to changing people's lives. A small step every day would one day make a positive difference in people's lives.'

You are welcome to join ASCA at <https://aussicklecelladvocacy.org> to save lives.





FITNESS to a T

A lawyer turned personal fitness trainer and holistic health & wellness Coach (Part 1)

After studying and practicing law, Teurai Chanakira found her calling in fitness training and health & wellness coaching. Originally from Zimbabwe, she moved to Australia after studying and practising law in the UK. Creative at heart, Teurai followed her passion. She considers that, 'the mind, emotions and the body must work together to achieve the result you want!'

Early years – the pathway to a law degree: Teurai says of her father, 'I wanted to make him happy.'

Teurai was born in Zimbabwe but moved to Germany with her parents when she was 13. After six years, she went to the UK where she completed the last two years of high school. Her father really wanted to be a lawyer while growing up, but he could not go to the university due to racial restrictions in Zimbabwe at the time. He ended up being an ambassador, but he carried on with his dream. 'He was someone who was very much into academic. You had to go to the university, to become something like a lawyer or a doctor or something like that. That was the culture at home. When it came to things like choosing a career path, dad was not very happy. So, I wanted to make him happy.'

At the university, Teurai studied law, obtaining a Bachelor of Laws and a Master of Laws from Birmingham University and Wolverhampton University, respectively. She thought, 'I will become a lawyer, I will just make money, I will be happy and that will be my life.' However, the reality was different. Teurai could not really find herself in a courtroom.

'Every day it was a drag to the point that I wondered what I was doing to myself'

Teurai practised law as a solicitor at a law firm in Wolverhampton in the UK, but she was miserable. She worked on a range of matters, including criminal, family, property, immigration law cases, thinking that she may find the elusive fulfilment, but her passion was in another field. She felt lost and miserable. 'It was not coming from my heart. Every day it was a drag to the point that I wondered what I was doing to myself.' In her search for inner energy to carry on with work, Teurai remembered good stories she had heard about Australia after finishing her master's degree, 'oh Australia is very good if you are a migrant, ...there are opportunities there.' She thought, 'maybe if I change countries, I will enjoy law.' She decided to do an Australian law degree (in Cairns). 'That is how I came to Australia, as a student in 2008.'

The beginning of her entrepreneurial journey - Becoming a qualified trainer in the Australian fitness industry

Teurai did not practice law in Australia, and she has no regret. Armed with her creative talent, she decided to follow her passion. It was a difficult decision. Her family and friends all asked: Why? All they saw was that she was wasting the massive investment into obtaining law degree, but Teurai set her sight beyond her past achievements. She was ready for the next chapter, and she knew she could do it. After losing her mum to breast cancer and separating from her partner, she moved to Melbourne where a new direction to her journey started.



'Ah, I can't do it anymore'

In Australia, Teurai had to complete 12 subjects for a Graduate Bachelor of Laws (with Honours), which she obtained with a Distinction average and a commendation for academic excellence. While studying, 'I worked as a legal editor at a publishing house, where they published legal books, statutes, new laws that were coming out (that judges were producing) – editing statutes books that law students and other people would read.' She also worked in places like refugee law clinics (e.g., the Cairns Community Legal Aid Centre), thinking that maybe if she helps people who are in need, she will find fulfilment in her job. However, when it came to her essence, Teurai knew that law was not her passion. Moving to Australia had not changed how she felt about law. 'I was miserable. I just got to that point where I thought, I can't do it anymore.'

'I think this is my call and it felt right in my soul. I never felt like that when I was doing law. There was light. I felt alive.'

In Melbourne, Teurai took up a customer service job at Bupa. At that point she decided to enrol in a fitness course. 'So, I would work during the day and in evenings and weekends, I attended classes.'

'I had always enjoyed fitness while growing up. When I started studying fitness coaching, I was so enthusiastic! In the class I was so interested in everything, you know, I was engrossed in everything the lecturers were saying. At some point, I thought, 'this is my call' and it felt right in my soul. I never felt like that when I was doing law. There was light. I felt alive.'



The only African woman in the fitness class and at the gym - Thinking outside the box

Teurai was passionate and wanted to do things differently. 'You know at that time, being a black woman, I was the only African black female in the class. Often at the gym where I was working, I was the only African woman. It was like...a personal trainer was someone who goes to the gym and trains someone. People were not thinking outside the box. I started thinking, 'why do I have to be someone who trains people at the gym only? Why can't I also write books? Why can't I have my own themes? And I started thinking about different ways to make it happen.'

Teurai is passionate about fitness, health, and wellness coaching. She empowers her clients and is committed to achieving results by drawing inspiration and resilience from her personal journey. When asked, 'What motivates you?' She said, 'Mum passed away in 2010, I got divorced following an abusive marriage and dad passed away a year later, in 2017. I was diagnosed with depression, but I refused to take medication. Instead, I started using things like exercise and doing a lot of reading. I went for counselling. I used all the services that they have in Australia, and I got better. Now I feel like I am really becoming myself.'

I think that's why I like when I say, 'holistic health coach'.

Teurai's approach to health and fitness is holistic: the mind, emotions and the body must work together to achieve the result you want! 'I talk to my clients not just about physical fitness but also support them emotionally and mentally to give them that confidence. As migrant women, some of us have been through mental health issues; people who moved from overseas they come here, they don't know what they are doing when settling.'

Fitness to a Tee - offers a range of fitness, health, and wellness packages

Teurai started her fitness business (Fitness to a Tee) by training people in a gym, but she has transitioned to online training. She offers a range of packages including Ready to Go, Healthy Foundation, I Choose Me, Embrace The Skin You're In and Hotty @ 40. These packages also include meal plans. 'One of the good things about the meal plans is that I also include the traditional food.' For more information about how you can train

with Teurai, please visit <https://www.fitnessstoatee.com.au>. A Personal Fitness Trainer and Holistic Health & Wellness Coach turned writer (to be continued – stay tune)



'THE WATER WELL PROJECT'

The Water Well Project is an award-winning not-for-profit charity led by volunteers and healthcare professionals, founded in 2011. We aim to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities from migrant, refugee, or asylum seeker backgrounds through health education. Health literacy empowers you with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to improve your physical and mental health and wellbeing!



Partner with us

Are you supporting a community-based organisation for individuals from migrant, refugee and/or asylum seeker background, and would like to learn more about health education?

We offer free health education sessions on many topics including:

- Navigating the Australian Healthcare System
- COVID-19 and vaccination
- Women's Health
- Healthy Eating
- Mental Health
- Bone & Joint Health
- Dental Hygiene

Our sessions aim to be engaging, interactive and culturally appropriate. Sessions are facilitated by volunteer healthcare professionals, including doctors, nurses, midwives, physiotherapists, who all work within the Australian healthcare system. We have access to accredited interpreters if needed for sessions conducted during usual business hours! Find out more and book a session <https://www.thewaterwellproject.org/communityorganisations/> (QR code)

 The Water Well Project



 SCAN ME



Social Distancing



The Water Well Project is a proud finalist for the HESTA Impact Organisation of the Year 2021 and the HESTA Excellence Awards 2021



Please feel free to email us at: mail@thewaterwellproject.org if you have any other questions about our organisation.

Welcome to Nouha Saigh's Gallery



By Nouha Saigh



SisterWorks

Founded in 2013 SisterWorks (SW) is a Social Enterprise operating in both Melbourne and Bendigo. SW's mission is to economically liberate women by paving pathways to education, employment and entrepreneurship for the most vulnerable Migrant Refugee and Asylum Seeker women (MRAW) in Victoria. SW generates a 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 two of the interviews, Ifrin Fottock, now head of social enterprise, talks to us about SW's Learning and Development (L&D) program and leadership style.

PART 2 BUILDING CAPACITIES - LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Q1. Competent human capital is one of the driving forces required to achieve success whether in a for-profit or Not-for Profit organisation. I am just wondering whether your HRD plan includes partnering with tertiary institutions such as Polytechnics, Kangan etc...to assist in staff learning and development, given that your plan is to expand into other rural areas in Victoria as well as internationally?

Ifirin: We have a program called social mentoring or body. For sisters with specific issues such as custody battles, family violence etc. We have a communal lunch where these issues can be discussed. A social body is assigned to the sister. This is just somebody to help them navigate the system, not necessary a social worker or a lawyer, to explore the options for housing, support, and legal information. A sister with underlying issues cannot learn properly because she is worrying whether this is the last time she will see her children, or where they are going to sleep.

Q2. Most of your staff come from internally, which is an excellent way to train and empower other women as they understand what their clients/students are going through b/c they have walked in their shoes. In your strategic plan, does your HRD incorporate building competencies on managing a succession plan by the Executives to avoid loss when unpredictable circumstances occur, resulting in losing some of your 'Type A' performers at top Management level?

Ifirin: We recruit them as volunteers. They are not required to come to SW, our social coordinator interviews them and provides them with an induction on building rapport with clients, and on empathy and confidentiality. We encourage the social body to meet women outside SW to give women a space and confidentiality.



PART 3 LEADERSHIP STYLE


Q1. According to your latest Annual report 2018-2019, your net profit decreased from approx. \$65,000 to \$37,000 last financial year; can you please explain what caused this decline?

Ifirin: This is an interesting question. At SW we have different people coming from different backgrounds, with different values. A leader needs to adapt. Using 'Control & Command' does not always enhance performance. At SW we use 'Leadership Style mix'. For instance, in our production unit a stern leadership is required to meet market demand and impart time management skills, best quality production and work ethics and efficiency. In our training unit leadership with social capability is crucial to build better rapport with participants. We strive to place the 'Right leader' in the 'Right place' rather than having 'One size fit all' leader.

Q2. How do you recruit people into the production unit, when a sister already has vocational skills, such sewing from their own home country?

Ifirin: We conduct an assessment to determine the level of learning that a sister needs. We have beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels in sewing. Sometimes it depends on what they would like to do. We can train them in production and product making to further start working in our production unit. To be continued ... Please stay tune for Part 4 on this amazing organisation, in our next edition. Meanwhile, if you would like to get in touch with Sisterworks, please visit <https://sisterworks.org.au/>

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