



Set the PACE

Five ways to design leadership programs
for migrant women, non-binary and
gender diverse people



PACE
Leadership



MULTICULTURAL
CENTRE FOR
WOMEN'S HEALTH



About this resource

This resource is developed by the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health (MCWH) for individuals and organisations working to implement leadership programs for migrant and refugee women, non-binary and gender diverse people.

Acknowledgement of Country

Multicultural Centre for Women's Health (MCWH) acknowledges and pays respect to the Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation, on whose land this guide was written. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their ancestors and Elders, both past and present and acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

As migrants to this country, we benefit from the colonisation of the land now called Australia. We have a shared responsibility to acknowledge the harm done to its first peoples and work towards respect and recognition.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are leaders in addressing gender and racial inequality. We acknowledge and celebrate Black and Indigenous people's work on intersectional theory, and hope to contribute to the wider project of respect and recognition for First Nations people in Australia.

MCWH Acknowledgements

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A special thank you to the 350 migrant and refugee women, non-binary and gender diverse people who have participated in our PACE Leadership Programs, and those who shared their time, knowledge and expertise in consultations to inform the *Best Practice Guide for Leadership Programs for Immigrant and Refugee Women* published in 2010. Our work in championing migrant women's leadership builds on the contributions made in the document and through over 14 years of program delivery.

Thanks to the PACE Leadership participants who are featured in the images in this guide, and to Nynno Bel-Air for photographing the images on the cover and page 7.

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Introduction

Leaders can transform societies.

They can mobilise individuals, groups and entire communities to challenge and change attitudes, behaviours, policies and laws. They can bring people together, spark conversations and raise the voices of those who are most marginalised. Strong leadership can address social inequities and improve health outcomes for all.

Yet, there remains a lack of representation of leadership from migrant and refugee women, non-binary and gender diverse people in Victoria (Victorian Government, 2022). Additionally, traditional models of leadership do not reflect the many diverse forms of leadership in our community. This has an impact on whose voices we hear and whose issues we address as a society.

One way to increase migrant and refugee women, non-binary and gender diverse people's leadership is to run programs that are tailored to their needs. This includes addressing some of the structural barriers that impact the way they are viewed (or not viewed) as leaders, their access (or lack of access) to leadership opportunities, and their participation in decision-making roles.

This resource shares five ways you can design your own programs to best support and foster migrant and refugee women, non-binary and gender diverse people's leadership:

1. Centre the experiences of migrant and refugee women, non-binary and gender diverse people
2. Challenge and redefine leadership roles
3. Budget and plan for accessibility
4. Consult and engage with communities
5. Use a feminist intersectional approach

1

Centre the experiences of migrant and refugee women, non-binary and gender diverse people

Recognising, respecting and centring the experiences of migrant and refugee women, non-binary and gender diverse people can build a safe space that allows participants to value, see and hear from individuals who are often marginalised or isolated.

Structural barriers such as gender and racial discrimination, or the lack of recognition of overseas qualifications can impact the way your participants are recognised as leaders, even though many of them will come to your program with pre-existing skills and capacities.

Acknowledging migrant and refugee women, non-binary and gender diverse people's experiences and building on their assets can change the power dynamics within your program. Moving towards a collaborative and strengths-based approach can empower your participants' capacity to become leaders.

Key considerations

- Use a trauma-informed approach in your program to build an environment that is safe, collaborative, empowering and inclusive.
- Incorporate a strengths-based approach to acknowledge and celebrate the leadership qualities your participants already possess.
- Embed migrant and refugee women, non-binary and gender diverse people's voices and experiences into your activities, learning materials and case studies.

Many of us are already leaders without even knowing it!

In PACE Leadership, we run an activity called 'My Leadership Skills', which helps us identify some of the skills we already have. It reminds us that we don't need to have all the skills to be a leader, and that we can work together to achieve community goals.



2

Challenge and redefine leadership roles

Traditional leadership roles often refer to formal managerial- or board-level positions within our workplaces and community organisations. While these roles can position people to support and transform the way we work, live and play, there are many other ways we can take the lead.

Migrant and refugee women, non-binary and gender diverse people are already leaders in their homes, workplaces and communities. Yet many do not see themselves as leaders because they do not fit within traditional models of leadership.

There is no one right way to be a leader. Challenging and redefining 'leadership' can enable more people to participate within their own spheres of influence.

Leadership needs to be inclusive, participatory and serving of migrant and refugee women, non-binary and gender diverse people. Collective, collaborative and social models of leadership are often more empowering than models of leadership which focus on improving individual status.

Key considerations

- In case studies, ensure representation of leaders from a diverse range of positions, roles, decision-making levels and industries.
- Support participants to seek out leadership opportunities within their own contexts.
- Use a strengths-based approach and recognise the leadership skills participants already have.

Leadership is a process involving actions and skills. Our PACE Leadership principles promote both individual and collective participation, advocacy, communication and engagement. Leadership is not necessarily a role, but a way of doing.

3

Budget and plan for accessibility

Prioritising accessibility will expand your reach and equitably include those who would otherwise not be able to attend your program.

Designing an inclusive program involves breaking down your participants' barriers to attendance. For migrant and refugee women, non-binary and gender diverse people and participants with disabilities, this can include:

- offering free childcare
- organising transport
- hiring interpreters
- booking local venues
- providing plain-English or multilingual resources
- installing wheelchair ramps
- planning around cultural events
- meeting dietary requirements
- allocating breaks in your schedule
- offering free or scholarship places
- providing learning materials in advance
- offering accommodation for participants living in rural or regional areas
- offering interpreting services
- printing resources in larger font sizes

It is important to consider and budget for these provisions at the design phase to ensure that your program is inclusive. Accessibility should never be an after-thought but instead, an essential component of every program.

Key considerations

- Allocate a budget for accessibility provisions.
- Consult with your community, local organisations and disability organisations to identify some of the needs of your target audience.
- Ensure that your program communications and promotions are easy-to-understand.
- Communicate to your target audience that you can offer provisions to meet their accessibility needs.
- Consider different forms of media to communicate with your target audience, including traditional (newspaper, radio, flyers) and digital (social media, emails) media.
- When recruiting, ask participants if they have any accessibility needs or dietary requirements.



Certificate of Completion

This certificate is to proudly certify that:

You can expand your reach if your participants know that your program is inclusive of their needs. In your promotions, be clear about how you will support participants to attend.

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Consult and engage with communities

Migrant and refugee women, non-binary and gender diverse people are the experts of their own lives. This means that they understand the issues impacting them and their communities, and, most importantly, know the solutions. You can identify how to best approach and support migrant and refugee women, non-binary and gender diverse people by consulting and engaging with relevant individuals, communities and organisations throughout your program.

These stakeholders can provide resources and advice on how to develop frameworks to respectfully engage with migrant and refugee women, non-binary and gender diverse people. This can help centre and value your participants' experiences, build trust and foster a safe platform for your participants to freely explore their leadership journey.

Key considerations

- Conduct meaningful consultations that centre the voices of migrant and refugee women, non-binary and gender diverse people prior to and throughout the implementation of your program.
- Collaborate with community leaders, communities, First Nations organisations, ethno-specific organisations, migrant services, disability services, LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual) organisations and women's health services to share, develop or distribute relevant resources.
- Develop a cultural safety framework to respectfully engage with migrant and refugee communities.
- Where relevant, offer bilingual information through interpreters or multilingual resources.

The needs of migrant and refugee women, non-binary and gender diverse people are always changing.

PACE Leadership consistently evaluates its program to ensure that it meets its participants' learning interests and needs. As a result, we have co-developed resources with participants and hosted guest-speaker presentations.

5

Use a feminist intersectional approach

A feminist intersectional approach enables social transformation by acknowledging the impact of structural issues related to gender, race, ethnicity, religion, ability, socio-economic position, sexuality, age, education level and immigration status on your participants. It provides a way to locate and address the multiple inequalities that impact migrant and refugee women, non-binary and gender diverse people's participation and leadership within our communities.

Using this approach allows you to see the bigger picture on the issues impacting your participants, and to take steps to address these inequalities. This can involve amplifying migrant and refugee women, non-binary and gender diverse people's representation, voices and expertise; centring their experiences; and fostering collective action to tear down structural barriers.

To learn more about intersectionality, please see Multicultural Centre for Women's Health's [Intersectionality Matters](#) (2017) guide.

Key considerations

- Consult with organisations with intersectionality expertise to embed an intersectional approach into your program.
- Respect and amplify migrant and refugee women, non-binary and gender diverse people's representation, voices and expertise.
- Break down access barriers and provide opportunities for participants to attend your program and access other services.



Prioritise migrant and refugee women, non-binary and gender diverse people's leadership in your program design and delivery. PACE Leadership is run by and for migrant and non-binary and gender diverse people - and this makes a world of a difference!

References

Moses, M. & Quiazon, R. (2010). Best Practice Guide for Leadership Programs for Immigrant and Refugee Women. Multicultural Centre for Women's Health: Melbourne.

State of Victoria, Australia (Department of Families, Fairness and Housing) (2022). Inquiry into economic equity for Victorian women Final Report.

About MCWH

Multicultural Centre for Women's Health (MCWH) is a feminist organisation led by migrant and refugee women to achieve equity in women's health and wellbeing. Established in 1978, MCWH advances the health and wellbeing of migrant and refugee women through multilingual information and education, research training and advocacy.

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About PACE Leadership

PACE (Participate, Advocate, Communicate, Engage) Leadership was developed in 2009 to increase migrant and refugee women, non-binary and gender diverse people's active participation and leadership in their workplaces, communities and daily lives. Since then, it has reached over 350 migrant and refugee people in Victoria.

