



Diasporas in Action

Working together for peace, development
and humanitarian response

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University of Melbourne
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MEDIA RELEASE

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AN AUSTRALIAN FIRST: EXPLORING THE POWER OF MIGRANT AND REFUGEE COMMUNITIES IN GLOBAL PEACE, DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

The Diaspora Learning Network will host the inaugural *Diasporas in Action: Working together for peace, development and humanitarian response* conference at the University of Melbourne on 26-27 September.

“Diasporas offer deep cultural, economic and political insights into their countries of origin, which is powerful knowledge for organisations and policy makers involved in issues of global justice,” says Denise Cauchi, Executive Director of Diaspora Action Australia and keynote speaker at the conference.

“Diasporas are increasingly recognised as innovators in the new humanitarian and development world order, however the full potential of diaspora organisations is only just beginning to be systematically explored in Australia.”

The Diaspora Learning Network, a collaboration of several civil society organisations, NGOs and the University of Melbourne, have created a forum for the unpacking of research, policy and linkages related to multicultural communities and their engagement with their countries of origin.

The conference will explore the unique and significant value which migrant and refugee communities, both new and old, bring to formal and informal efforts of peacebuilding, human development and humanitarian action in their home countries. With diaspora communities frequently having migrated as a result of experiences of war, poverty or political unrest, there remains powerful ties to family and community, particularly in the developing world.

“We are excited to learn from and be led by presenters from backgrounds as diverse as Sri Lankan, Afghan, Fijian, Sudanese and Nepali. We look forward to sharing best practice and seeing new partnerships emerge between researchers, practitioners and communities,” says Ms Cauchi, who is herself a member of the Maltese diaspora community of Melbourne.

Attracting diaspora community leaders, policy makers and representatives of major international NGOs, this conference will reveal how Australia’s past and present immigration policies have led to a dynamic and powerful multicultural society which is working to solve some of the world most pressing problems.

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The Diaspora Learning Network is an initiative of Diaspora Action Australia and The University of Melbourne in partnership with the Australian Red Cross, Refugee Council of Australia, Australian Council for International Development, Oxfam Australia and Research for Development Impact Network, with funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

A copy of the *Diasporas in Action* conference program is available [here](#).