



Supporting Communities,  
Strengthening Voices

# East Web

## PROJECT FACTS

### YMCA RAMADAN SOCCER CHAMPIONSHIPS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Ramadan is a Muslim religious observance that takes place during the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. It is the Islamic month of fasting, in which participating Muslims do not eat or drink anything from dawn until sunset. After breaking the long day of fasting each evening, many young Muslims find that they are full of energy but have nowhere to go and nothing to do. For the last 8 years at the Carlton Baths Community Centre, YMCA Youth Services, in collaboration with the Muslim community in the Carlton housing area and Victoria Police, have run a late night soccer competition involving up to 80 young people in each night of competition. The competition has been an enormous success, with young Muslims from many backgrounds playing in the competition together and keeping fit. It has also been an important forum for the Victoria Police to get involved in the Muslim community, with police officers helping to referee the competition (and sometimes even playing!)

Until recently, YMCA organisers and staff have run the event and organised professional referees. In 2008, an EastWeb grant supported the innovation of an initiative providing leadership training, and skills training in event coordination. A group of ten young Muslim leaders from the East African communities - identified through their involvement in the competition in previous years - engaged in formal leadership training and mentoring through the Centre for Multicultural Youth, and have played a central role in the coordination and delivery of this extremely popular event.

The young men have received training in first aid, occupational violence and event coordination training and will form the Youth Committee that will staff the Ramadan Project and Youth Week Events in April 2009. It is hoped that the project will allow the communities to develop ownership of the competition, create an opportunity for young people to receive work readiness training and allow young people to be valued for their contribution to the project and to be paid accordingly.

The importance of organised sport in supporting the health, social connectedness and general wellbeing of migrant and refugee young has been demonstrated through reports from organisations as diverse as the Centre for Multicultural Youth and the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation. Providing young people with the opportunity to develop skills necessary to run sporting activities gives young people ownership of events in their community, and ensures that young people can continue to work with their communities to build social connectedness, health and general wellbeing.

For additional information on the role of sports and mentoring in young people's wellbeing, see VicHealth <http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au> and Centre for Multicultural Youth <http://www.cmy.net.au>

To get involved in Ramadan Soccer in 2009, contact Carlton Parkville Youth Services 03 9347 3600.

**The EastWeb Fund**  
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