



**2020-
2021**

ANNUAL REPORT



**ACTION RESEARCH
CENTRE LTD**

ABN: 49 641 992 243

<https://www.actionresearchcentre.org.au>

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CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

Action Research Centre Ltd commenced its first year with our Board, Leadership, and Research Teams looking forward with energy and purpose.

Despite the challenges the pandemic presented, our Board and research teams approached the year with hope, energy and commitment. Our volunteers supported our initiatives and continue to provide much needed assistance where required.

The members of the newly constituted ARC Ltd Board gathered initially face-to-face in January but with the obstacles presented by Covid-19, maintained our schedule of meetings on-line. The compassion and support the directors offered to each other became a hallmark of our board and energised each of us in contributing our skills to the development of the Action Research Centre.

Key outcomes from our first year of operation included being recognised as a Not-for-Profit and being designated DGR status; and secondly, entering into collaborations with like-minded organisations. Indeed a central goal for ARC Ltd is to continue forging in-depth collaborations to ensure our engagement is impactful and our organisation becomes more widely known.



Under the leadership of Dr Titus Olorunnisola, we turned our attention to crafting our business strategy for 2021-2023. Crucial components of this strategy include fundraising and marketing. A key goal of our business strategy for our first year was to increase the public awareness of the Action Research Centre.

A standout partnership which was established in 2021 was with the Mental Health Foundation of Australia. This partnership saw both ARC and MHF supporting a project close to all of our hearts - "Stories which Gladden the Heart". In this project, the aims were to alleviate the struggles and isolation of women who are experiencing mental health challenges in Melbourne, through storytelling. Due to childbirth, stress, economic situations, COVID-related isolation and domestic violence, women often exhibit symptoms of anxiety, depression, panic attacks or trauma reactions, on a short term or long term basis.

CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

Looking forward

Our Strategic Plan for 2021 – 2023 contains our firmly embedded views of human rights and the voices of refugees, asylum seekers and those from CALD communities.

Our work requires Action Research Centre supporters to work closely together with people seeking asylum and refugees to drive systemic change. This advocacy is underpinned by the research undertaken by ARC.

In line with our business strategy for 2021, ARC also designed a new website, a revamped logo, a YouTube channel and promoted our donation capacity with DGR status.

To our supporters and donors who backed us as a grass-roots greenfield organisation throughout 2021, we extend our sincere gratitude. We look forward to their continuing support as we implement our future plans.

My thanks go to my fellow Board members and to Titus for their steadfast leadership; and to all of our researchers, volunteers, members and supporters without whom the work of Action Research Centre would not be possible.

At ARC, we are excited by the challenges and initiatives ahead in 2022.

Maureen Hegarty
ARC Board, Chair

CEO'S MESSAGE

The Pandemic as a 'revealer'

The first year of Action Research Centre Ltd (ARC) is full of memories that shall endure for years to come. ARC commenced its operation in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. This period revealed the hidden struggles of many married and unmarried intimate partners, and children. COVID-19 pandemic and the numerous lockdowns affected the culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities in some significant ways. Lack of social support, loss of jobs and the limited access to community support were all endemic in the social and economic systems but were unveiled through the incursion of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Focus of ARC

The uniqueness of ARC is found in its desire to merge research with advocacy in the areas of domestic and family violence (DFV), homelessness, refugees and asylum seekers, and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people in Australia. By researching and bringing our research into the space of policy dialogue (in collaboration with industry partners and experts), we envisage the change in policy directions that will emancipate women and children from violence, the refugees, homeless people, and asylum seekers from social and economic marginality.



Our Impacts

In the first year of ARC, we embraced the tactical value of community engagement in our work. We developed and fostered partnerships with organisations such as Mental Health Foundation Australia, Centre for Migrant and Refugee Health and Whitley College (of the University of Divinity). We will continue to work very closely with our industry partners and experts to enable us to remain strong and relevant as an organisation that brings critical reflection to touch on advocacy.

We also flagged off eight research projects which are intended to contribute to social policy and social change in the areas of our strategic importance. Our series of Public Evidence Presentations (PEP) attracted more than one hundred attendees.

CEO'S MESSAGE

The high point of our achievement in the year 2020-21 was our approval by the Department of Education Skills and Employment (DESE) as an Approved Research Institute (ARI). As an ARI, ARC is recognised 'as an organisation undertaking interdisciplinary research which is, or may prove to be, of value to Australia.' Consequently, the Australian Taxation Office approved ARC as a tax-deductible gift recipient (DGR) status.

ARC and the Future of Social Change

As we approach a 'COVID-19 normal world', the future of social change in the areas of our strategic focus is largely dependent on the extent to which policymakers allow research and critical reflection to give an impetus to advocacy. Evidence-informed advocacy is the way forward. ARC occupies a strategic place in facilitating this process as we relentlessly engage in critical reflection in our collaboration with the experts, community groups and academia.

I am immensely grateful to the Inaugural Board of ARC for the unwavering commitment to the work of ARC in the first year of its operation. Our researchers and volunteers have exhibited a high level of support and resilience in carrying out their responsibilities. I owe a debt of gratitude and appreciation to everyone who has been a part of our journey since its inception.

Thank you.

Dr Titus S. Olorunnisola
Founder & CEO

OUR PROGRESS..

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

THE ISSUE

Domestic violence is growing in Australia annually with direct consequences on children, families, and the economy. It hinders workers' peak performance in the workplace as it remains one of the factors currently militating against Australian society in general. We are continuing to build credible partnerships with major industry experts to identify the areas that have been investigated and those that need further exploration to enable us to identify future policy directions in the areas of domestic violence.

The Australia's National Research Agenda to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2020–2022 guided our evidence-based research and the way that we want to do advocacy. The projects that we commenced in this area provide intersectionality both to our investigation and advocacy.

RESEARCH

- 
- Reviewed existing data to identify knowledge gaps on the state of domestic violence in Australia
 - Reviewed existing data on the impacts of domestic violence on children in Australia
 - Assembled and reviewed government portals to know the support available to women experiencing domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic

WHAT WE ACHIEVED..



One public knowledge-sharing event on the state of domestic violence in Australia with 52 participants



One public knowledge-sharing event on the effects of domestic violence on children's outcomes in Australia with 49 participants

HOMELESSNESS

THE ISSUE

We recognised homelessness as a complex situation often orchestrated by multiple factors. While temporary homelessness can occur from a few days up to five months, chronic homelessness often spans between a year and a few years. Our interest in this subject includes understanding the key underline factors that result in homelessness and how multiple factors can combine to render people homeless and the appropriate policy interventions that will enable those experiencing homelessness to exit the fringe of homelessness.

We worked closely with temporary/housing providers to understand the current trends and key areas that need policy overhauling.



RESEARCH

- We assembled data on the intersection between homelessness and domestic violence
- Reviewed data to identify key policy changes

REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS RESETTLEMENT

THE ISSUE

Australia as an immigrant nation has so much reason to focus on understanding the experiences of recent refugees and asylum seekers. There is an urgent need to pay close attention to the process of inclusion of recent refugees as Australia plans to welcome more refugees and asylum seekers into the country.

Our projects devote considerable attention to hearing the voices of recent refugees and asylum seekers with the view to create a two-way transformation across social level. Firstly, it will foster the inclusion and belonging of refugees in the community. It will reveal the areas where government and not-for-profit organisations can collaborate to improve the living conditions of refugees. Secondly, it will enable the formulation of relevant policies and promote evidence-based advocacy that will contribute to social change in Australia.



RESEARCH

Our key project in this area investigates the resettlement experiences of African asylum/refugee communities over a period of twenty years.

WHAT WE ACHIEVED..

- ✓ **Embarked on dialogue** with industry experts to identify current problems around the resettlement of refugees and asylum seekers in the community
- ✓ **Identified current knowledge** gaps on the challenges faced by refugee communities in Victoria
- ✓ **Identified the resettlement priorities** of refugee communities through refugees' experiences in Victoria

INCLUSIVE AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

THE ISSUE

Action Research Centre Limited continues to develop its research and advocacy drive by investigating several ways of building resilience in the community by harnessing human assets and how it is capable of catalysing resilience.



RESEARCH

Reviewed existing data on problems faced by migrant workers and community participation in Australia

Reviewed the literature on issues surrounding asset-based approaches to building community resilience

WHAT WE ACHIEVED..



We completed a project that investigates asset-based community development (ABCD) approaches to community resilience.

OUR PERFORMANCE

Our focus is to provide credible evidence that will inform policy dialogue and result in practical actions that will change the living conditions of vulnerable members of the community.



HIGHLIGHTS

8
PROJECTS
COMMENCED

2
PRIMARY
RESEARCH

6
SECONDARY
RESEARCH

**ALL OF OUR PROJECTS FALL
INTO 3 CATEGORIES:**



SECONDARY
LITERATURE
REVIEWS



ANALYSIS OF
ADMINISTRATIVE
DATA



PRIMARY
RESEARCH

SECONDARY LITERATURE REVIEWS

Action Research Centre Limited continues to develop its research and advocacy such as scoping literature reviews, meta-analysis and other forms of secondary research to assist us to identify existing research and to identify current knowledge gaps. The findings of other researchers provide us with an avenue to design pilot projects. Data reviewed in the current year in secondary research involved:

- data on refugees,
- migrants, homelessness and
- domestic violence nationally and internationally.



ANALYSIS OF ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

Provide us with comprehensive information on government policy around homelessness, domestic violence and refugee resettlement. Our analysis of government portals and policy documents are foundational to our engagement in policy dialogue to make a change to future policy directions. The relevant area investigated during the current year include:

- Government portals on the support available to women experiencing domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic in the states and territories of Australia.

PRIMARY RESEARCH

Gives us the opportunity to collect data through a range of methodologies for analysis. Our current primary research investigates the experiences of inclusion of African asylum seekers over a twenty year period.



CURRENT PROJECTS..

Project Title	Aims	Current State
<i>Family and domestic violence in Australia: What is missing and what do we need to know?</i>	This project aims to understand the current themes and focus of research on family and domestic violence in Australia. It identifies the knowledge gaps in the existing research and literature.	Nov. 2020 – Nov. 2021. Completed. Submitted for peer-reviewed publication to Journal of Migration and Human Security.
<i>What are they saying about children & domestic violence?: An integrative literature review.</i>	The project identifies the existing knowledge gaps on the subject of children and domestic violence especially the outcomes of domestic violence on children.	Nov. 2020 - Nov. 2021. Completed. First draft ready. Final peer reviewed publication will be submitted in January 2022.
<i>A scoping Review on the contributions of domestic violence to the problem of Homelessness among women and the types of the available long term services required to promote resilience.</i>	This project seeks evidence to understand the interplay between women's homelessness and domestic violence in order to identify the long term services required to facilitate resilience for homeless women due to their experience of domestic violence.	May 2021- Data analysis in progress.



CURRENT PROJECTS..

Project Title	Aims	Current State
<i>Experiences of inclusion: African migrants in Victoria, 1998 - 2018.</i>	This project investigates the resources, networks, support systems, or programs, social and cultural networks that assisted recent African refugees/asylum seekers in the process of their settlement and inclusion into the community.	Feb. 2020- Ethics clearance completed. Interviews in progress.
<i>Asset-based approaches to building community resilience: A metanarrative and synthesis analysis.</i>	This project investigates the current approaches to community resilience including the knowledge gaps in the principles and practices of community resilience and inclusion in Australia.	Nov. 2020 - Dec. 2021 Project completed. Peer reviewed publication submitted.
<i>The Future of Australian labour mobility and community participation.</i>	To understand the trajectories of Australian labour migration in recent years including problems faced by recent skilled migrants and policy to foster their inclusion in the community.	Nov. 2020- Analysis in progress.



CURRENT PROJECTS..

Project Title	Aims	Current State
<i>An exploration of Australian online portals for women experiencing domestic violence during COVID-19: a content analysis.</i>	This project assesses the content of online government portals for women seeking access to and support for domestic violence in each state and territory across Australia during COVID-19.	Jun. 2020- Data analysis in progress.
<i>Stories that Gladden the Heart</i>	This research aims to deconstruct negative public knowledge, attitudes, and perception (KAB) about women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities who are experiencing, or at risk of mental health difficulties. Being conducted in collaboration with Mental Health Foundation Australia.	Nov. 2021- Ethics clearance approved.

Our team comprises research experts and research administrators with advanced skills to engage in projects that drive policy dialogue and social change.



Alexandra Anastasov

Alla Gansteva

Dr Aysha Ayyaz

Bridget Doyle

Beau Murphy

Catie Bridgeman

Carmel Khalili

Claire Latumahina

Cohen Auguston

Dulcie Surany

Gabrielle De Vries

Hannah Lester

Jaimee Hay

Jennifer Heart

Jonny Pasterk

Juan Salinas

Dr Joanne Patroni

Kate Thomas

Katherine Murtagh

Kerrie McWaters

Linda Harvey

Lu Lefranc (Media/Communications)

Dr Lucy Lewis

Marina Lipovic (Grants & Tender)

Marlena Leslie

Megan Edmunds

Michelle Yu

Nav Prasad

Patrick Abordo

Putu Novi Arfirsta Dharmayani

Rebecca Feasey

Samantha Thomas

Sofie Amy Merrick

Stephanie Bliss

Nicholas Marinucci

Vanessa Scordo

Yana Ryakhavskaya

Yanran Yu

Yvonne Gao

OUR PEOPLE

DIRECTORS' ROLE

DR TITUS S. OLORUNNISOLA



CEO, Founder & Executive
Board Member

**B.A., B.Th., M.A., PhD, Grad Cert. of
ResMangmt**

Dr Titus S. Olorunnisola has over a decade of research experience on social issues, especially on the intersections between faith, migration, development, social change, inclusion and belonging.

A former Commonwealth Scholar at the University of Divinity, his research addresses the subject of socio-political reconciliation and social transformation. He is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the University of Divinity and Research Projects Officer (RPO) at Whitley College, University of Divinity, where he manages a range of research projects on migration, refugees and diaspora issues, and spiritual care and ageing.

Titus has also researched extensively including as part of the research team on an European Union (EU) commissioned project in conjunction with the Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) on the project tagged Models for Integration through Religion Activation, Cultural Learning and Exchange (MIRACLE).

Titus is the Chief Executive Officer at the Action Research Centre and leads the research team. Titus is an external Higher Degree by Research Supervisor at Alphacrucis University College, Melbourne Campus among other external academic roles

DIRECTORS' ROLE

MAUREEN HEGARTY



Independent Non-Executive
Chairperson

B.A. Politics and Criminology; B.A. Occupational Therapy

Maureen is a founding director of Communus, a marketing and business promotion organisation. Communus also manages a large business network, Networking Matters, aimed at bringing corporate, government, small businesses and NFPs together to assist their business connections.

Maureen has been involved in SME's and public participation ventures for many years. Her extensive business experience has given her a unique perspective on the challenges and opportunities of connecting key stakeholders with each other for mutual benefit. She has a particular interest in connecting people with aligned interests and assisting businesses to partner for positive community outcomes.

Maureen has a Bachelor of Occupational Therapy and a Bachelor of Arts. She spent many years working abroad in the healthcare sector and the education field which involved strategic planning for engagement for philanthropic outcomes.

Maureen is committed to advocating for, and empowering, marginalised people and their families to achieve optimal independence and just outcomes.

DIRECTORS' ROLE

MARIA DIMITRIADIS



Independent Non-Executive
Director (Secretary)

BSc (Hons) Pharmacology; Bachelor of Health Science (BHSc. Nat) Naturopathy; Diploma of Marketing (Dip. Mkt)

Maria is an experienced executive with a professional career that expands over 25 years in the healthcare sector settings including aged care, Medical & Pharmaceutical, Community Health, Natural Health, Optical, Veterinary and Government.

Maria's academic qualifications include a Bachelor of Science Honours in Pharmacology, Bachelor of Health Science-Naturopathy and a Diploma in Marketing.

Maria likes to take a hands-on and committed approach to business and life. Maria provides business advice to small -medium companies where she helps them put together business plans, marketing strategies, sales and operation teams. Maria is selective with the organisations she chooses to work with as they need to align with her values and philosophies.

"For me I work with organisations /social enterprises that will make a difference to people's day to day lives."

DIRECTORS' ROLE

JANE HOOKER



Independent Non-Executive
Director

Postgraduate Certificate (Master's) of Management in Health & Social Care; Bachelor of Health Science (Nursing)

A socially-conscientious, senior professional leader who has a wealth of professional leadership, most recently in driving Family Violence reform and capabilities within all publicly funded health services across Victoria.

Jane has experience in working with diversity and multi-disciplinary environments. Jane has a professional nursing background and her roles have included principal senior practitioner, regional leader, director and regional manager.

She has had extensive experience in leading women's health, sexual and reproductive health and family violence prevention over the last 20 years in the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia. She brings wide experience in advocacy, research, communications, service improvement, strategic planning, review and management processes.

DIRECTORS' ROLE

MARCUS WONG



Independent Non-Executive
Director

Post Graduate Certificate in Data Science and Business Analytics; Graduate Certificate of Business (Marketing); Master of Engineering (Civil); Bachelor of Engineering (Civil)/Bachelor of Business (Management).

Marcus Wong is a business advisor/analyst who has been operating and consulting for the small and medium enterprises (SME) sector for over 10 years. He evaluates consistency and importance of different business intelligence data against needs to determine optimal courses of action, and analyses qualitative and quantitative data to uncover competition and industry information to drive business revenue for SME. The projects he has involved in come from different industries such as banking, insurance, airlines, tourism, education, retail, real estate, used car, etc.

Marcus is also the founder of Time of Art (ToA), who develops and manages cross-cultural artistic and educational projects. With over 10 years of experience in project management, Marcus aims to provide a platform for artists to exchange and express ideas through creative integrations and educational implementations. Some successful ongoing projects such as Paper Culture series and Bluestonia: Paperhood, have reached over 3 millions of audience locally and internationally. These projects were highly praised and regarded by the local governments, communities and educational institutions (e.g. Creative Victoria, RMIT University, Multicultural Arts Victoria, etc.), and were featured in the mainstream media (e.g. ABC, SBS, Herald Sun, Nine, etc.).

Prior to Time of Art, Marcus was the Chief Operating Officer at an international finance company, developing and managing the operational procedures to support over AU\$200 millions of mortgage funds for clients across Asia Pacific Region. This helped the company to win and be nominated for multiple industry awards during the period of his service.

Marcus is an Australian Chinese with a strong multicultural background. He was born in Hong Kong, completed high school in Canada, obtained his first bachelor degree in Australia. He started his career as a civil engineer in Europe. After all, he was back in Melbourne Australia to continue on further postgraduate studies.

Having a strong belief in helping others and giving back to society, Marcus is passionate about participating in charity activities (e.g. fundraising runs) and voluntary work. He is now mentoring at Monash Business School, volunteering at Life.Church as well as being a Non-Executive Director at Multicultural Arts Victoria (MAV) and Action Research Centre (ARC).

DIRECTORS' ROLE

NATHANIEL CHAU, CA



Independent Non-Executive
Director

**GradDip CA; Bachelor of Commerce
(Accounting and Economics).**

Nathaniel has extensive experience in Australia's financial services industry as a former prudential regulator and has held various management roles across the banking, insurance and wealth management sectors. He brings proven expertise in risk, compliance and governance, and strong strategic and analytical thinking.

Nathaniel has a commerce and economics background and is a qualified Chartered Accountant.

MEETINGS OF DIRECTORS



2020-
2021

Director	A	B
Dr Titus S. Olorunnisola	10	10
Maureen Hegarty	10	10
Maria Dimitriadis	10	9
Marcus Wong	10	9
Jane Hooker	10	8
Nathaniel Chau, CA	10	7
Seifer Mujic (Resigned 18 August 2021)	10	4

A = Number of meetings eligible to attend

B = Number of meetings attended

COMMITTEES TO THE BOARD

FINANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (FAC)

The purpose of FAC is to advise Management and the Board on matters relating to the financial operation of ARC. This includes reviewing preliminary budgets prepared by Management.

The following people form this Committee:

Nathaniel Chau, CA (Chair)

Marcus Wong

GOVERNANCE

Governance Committee monitors the compliance requirements of the organisation. This includes the requirement of the ARC as a charity and its statutory obligations as an Approved Research Institute (ARI).

Members of the Governance Committee include:

Maureen Hegarty

Dr Titus S. Olorunnisola

ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Ethics Committee provides advice on the ethical implications of the review of projects with human subjects. Members include:

Jane Hooker and Maria Dimitriadis

MARKETING COMMITTEE

Marketing Committee supports the organisation with the engagement strategy. Members include:

Maria Dimitriadis and Maureen Hegarty

CONTRIBUTIONS ON WINDING UP

In the event of the company being wound up, ordinary members are required to contribute a maximum of \$100 each. Honorary members are not required to contribute.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Revenue

Donations	\$7,052.01
Other	\$55.00

Total Revenue	\$7,107.01
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Expenses

Insurance	\$2,324.62
Zoom	\$320.90
Basecamp	\$1,717.41
Zohomail	\$190.74
Website expenses	\$561.35
Office equipment	\$809.75
Research software	\$175.00
Accounting cost	\$40.00

Total Expenses	\$6,139.77
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NOTE ON FINANCIAL SUMMARY

This financial summary presents the records of the organisation based on the activities of the ARC during its first year of operation. The financial summary shows that the income is low and this can be ascribed to a number of reasons. ARC is a new organisation that commenced operation in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and as a result, had little public exposure and a low fundraising drive. The COVID-19 pandemic made it challenging to generate income either through fundraising, donations, and other community support channels.

We anticipate that ARC will continue to increase its income level through multiple streams such as grants, fundraising, donations, and other options which are currently being explored.

Nathaniel Chau

Nathaniel Chau, CA
For Finance Advisory Committee

