



# 'A Day in the Life' series

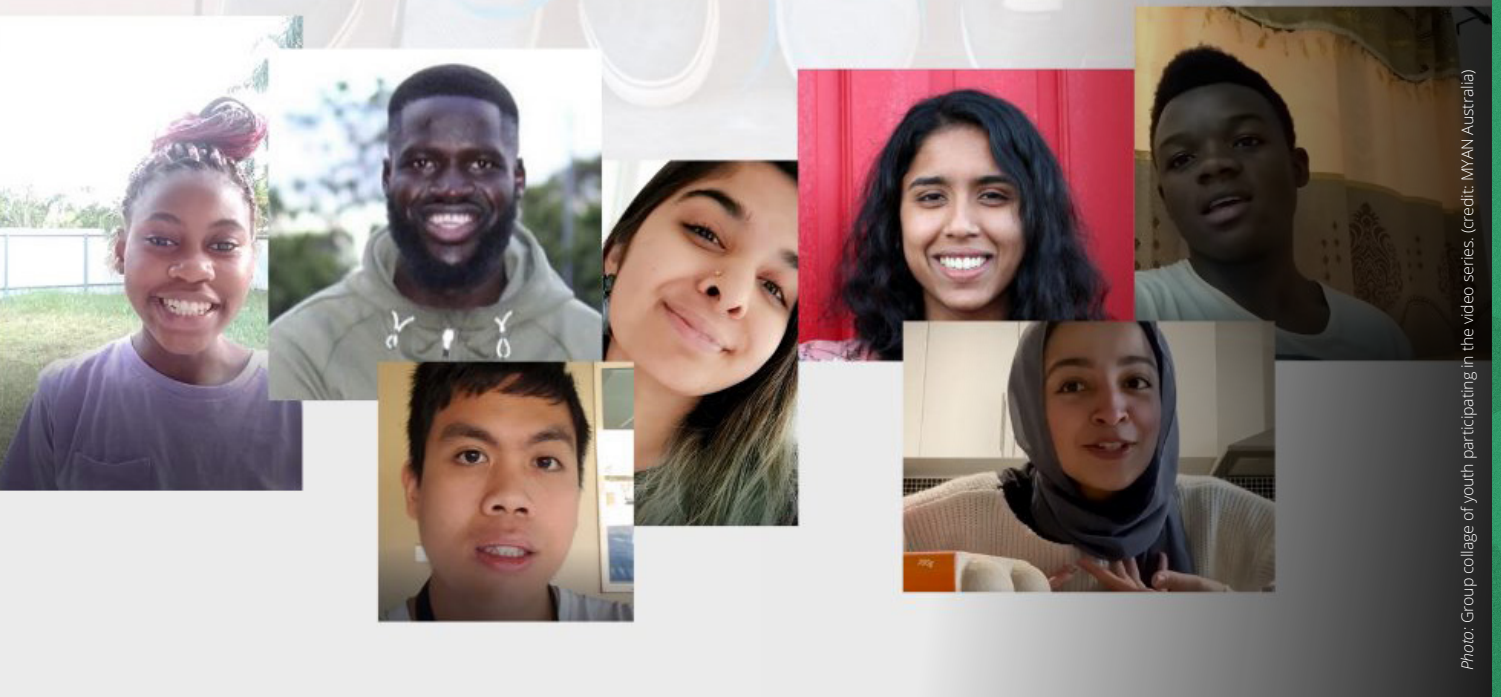



Photo: Group collage of youth participating in the video series. (credit: MYAN Australia)

## CASE STUDY


### 'A DAY IN THE LIFE' VIDEO SERIES OF YOUNG PEOPLE DURING THE PANDEMIC

*'THE REASON THIS PROJECT WAS EFFECTIVE IS BECAUSE WE AS PARTICIPANTS HAD CREATIVE FREEDOM, IT WAS OPEN AND NOT PUSHING FOR A SPECIFIC AGENDA, INSTEAD IT LET YOUNG PEOPLE CREATE THEIR OWN AGENDA. IT ALSO MATTERED THAT WE WERE ENGAGED AND CONTINUE TO BE INVOLVED IN THE YOUTH SPACE... IT WAS ALSO AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVES TO WHAT WAS BEING SAID ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE IN MAINSTREAM MEDIA AT THAT TIME. IT HELPED YOUTH LIKE ME TO MANAGE AND NAVIGATE THE EXPECTATIONS OF HAVING TO OPTIMIZE LOCKDOWN TIME AND BE 'PRODUCTIVE'".*


Mehak Sheikh, Youth Volunteer.

-  The aim of the 'A Day in the Life' video initiative was to show the diverse needs of young people during the pandemic and to highlight the diversity of experience of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds across Australia.


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-  The project used video to amplify the voices of young people about their experiences and perspectives in the pandemic.

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-  14 youth participants were trained and supported to produce individual video diaries.

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-  This initiative was led by Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN), a national organization representing the rights and interests of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in Australia, which was funded by the Australian government.

## THE COVID-19 CONTEXT

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As the pandemic began in Australia and policies were being created, young people's voices were not widely articulated or heard. Many meetings were held to discuss issues being faced by youth who, due to different policy responses across Australia, were experiencing lockdowns, school closures and physical distancing in diverse ways. While this was happening, youth themselves were not being heard and made a part of these discussions.

MYAN heard from its youth members that there was a need to articulate the variety of their experiences and needs, particularly for young people who were already marginalized by coming from

refugee and migrant backgrounds. The youth told MYAN that they wanted to put forth their voices at the forefront of discussions on the COVID-19 pandemic response policies and were prepared to share their experiences to counter negative and inaccurate stereotypes about young people in the media.

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was a priority of MYAN to make sure that young people were able to raise their voices on the issues that mattered most to them and were supported to identify and advocate for solutions in the short, medium, and longer term.

## THE INTERVENTION

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Applying a skill building and advocacy approach, MYAN focused on building young peoples' leadership and advocacy to tell their own stories. Thus the 'A Day in the Life' video series amplified the voices of youth from refugee and migrant backgrounds around Australia to navigate the implications of COVID-19 on their daily lives.

The series featured 14 young people aged 15-26 sharing their life experiences under COVID-19 restrictions. This included personal accounts about how they stayed safe and healthy, and how they supported each other, their families, and communities, and how the pandemic impacted employment, education, wellbeing and connections

with friends and family. They also featured multiple creative ways in which they responded to these challenges and demonstrated the diversity of their experiences across Australia. The videos shared the young people's personal narratives of staying safe and healthy, and supporting each other and their communities during that time.

The videos were developed by youth, including by some who had never made or edited a film. The young video creators were assisted by MYAN with technical support and resources, video editing, as well as sound support. This was done in a way that was sensitive to the needs of young people and did not include any factors that would influence the work

besides the sharing of basic guidelines such language and tone.

Participants were free to tell their stories and express themselves in any way they chose. Young people held most of the decision-making power in

the project. They had creative freedom over their content and the product was respectful of young people's diverse views, backgrounds, and identities. Once completed, the videos were disseminated across MYAN's social media platforms.

## OUTCOMES & RESULTS

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The videos played a key role in amplifying the voice and expressions of youth and it also created an opportunity for MYAN to use the

videos for informing policy approaches by identifying key issues that were important to young people at the beginning of the pandemic.

## MEETING CHALLENGES

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A major challenge facing the initiative was the need to solely operate in an online space due to COVID-19 social distancing. Particularly challenging was providing multi-media training online to

the youth participants. This challenge was addressed as much as possible by developing an online community for the participants to serve as a space where they could belong.

## KEY LESSONS

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The importance of youth expressing themselves and having a voice represents a key takeaway from this practice. MYAN recognized that young people have unique perspectives and knowledge, and, as experts in their own lives, they must be viewed as partners in identifying and implementing solutions. The videos showed the diversity of this experience and gave a platform to the participants to share their self-directed creative narratives.

The video series showed the range of the experiences shared by youth under

COVID-19, highlighting that while young people share many similarities, every one of them are unique in their own way, including in their response to COVID-19.

The second take-away was the importance of centering the voices of youth in policy making and the need to integrate their experiences into it. Notably, this project helped establish multicultural youth voices and experiences early in the pandemic which were also fed into policies, thanks to the involvement of the Australian Department of Health.

The videos have also shown the power of personal stories to highlight important themes and capture the audience's attention. MYAN youth advocates learnt that the stories, feedback, and advice from young people are even more compelling when they are the faces of their own stories.

Another take-away was about the importance of participation as a core principle. Participation in the series was voluntary and free from coercion,<sup>1</sup> with participants free to withdraw from the project at any time. They were also remunerated, paying respect to their work on the project.

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The video series can be viewed here: <https://myan.org.au/vaccine-intake-and-advocacy/a-day-in-life-series/>

For further information about this case study, you can contact the project team via email: [myanprojects@myan.org.au](mailto:myanprojects@myan.org.au)

You can also find out more by visiting the organization's websites: [Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network \(MYAN\)](#)

1. In line with the Global Consensus Statement on Meaningful Adolescent and Youth Engagement.

### Collective Service - For a Community-Led Response

The Collective Service, a strategic partnership between UNICEF, IFRC, and WHO, with the support of GOARN enables collaboration between a wide range of organizations to increase the scale and quality of community engagement approaches in public health emergencies and other crises. Find out more: <https://www.rcce-collective.net>

**This document forms part of a collection of 7 case studies, and has been selected by the Youth Engagement Subgroup YES! of the Collective Service (UNICEF, WHO, IFRC, GOARN) as an initiative of UNICEF, UNAIDS, and the Collective Helpdesk with the support of UN WOMEN and the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action, as part of an open call for good practices to document, analyze, and promote youth engagement and youth leadership across countries and regions.**