



# Annual Report 2019-2020

*We acknowledge the Aboriginal traditional owners of the land on which we work, and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.*

Latin Stories Australia, 2020

Author: Dr Trinidad Abascal

ABN 9755 8392 056

Incorporated Association (VIC): A0097599L

E: [latinstoriesaustralia@gmail.com](mailto:latinstoriesaustralia@gmail.com)

<https://www.latinstoriesaustralia.com>

For more information contact Latin Stories Australia's team

E: [latinstoriesaustralia@gmail.com](mailto:latinstoriesaustralia@gmail.com)

[www.latinstoriesaustralia.com](http://www.latinstoriesaustralia.com)

# Table of Contents

1 Message from Directors

2 Achievements

3 Inspiring migration series

4 Interweaving/Entretejiendo

8 We are all equal

11 Nuestras voces

12 Building Bridges Exhibition

13 COVID-19 initiatives

15 Community engagement



# Message from Directors

We are proud and pleased to share with you this report on Latin Stories Australia's work and achievements for the financial year 2019-20. This year the organisation focused on contributing to women's empowerment, sense of belonging, inclusion, and safety. We worked with the diverse Latin American Community in Victoria. It was also a year of expansion and growth as we travelled through this beautiful state to deliver sessions. We also welcomed to the Latin Stories Australia's family, for the first time, an amazing group of committed volunteers.

Since 2015, our organisation has collected over 200 migration stories from Latin American migrants living in Australia. These stories recount the main challenges faced by our community, including for example, the absence of family and social networks, feelings of isolation and lack of sense of belonging. We also identified that the lack of understanding of Australian values and culture could be a barrier to feel welcomed and supported by the Australian community.

In Victoria, only 24% of women of Latin American background have a full-time position and almost 50% are unemployed. This makes Latin American women more prone to isolation, lack of empowerment and lack of participation into the Australian social, economic and civil life. Research suggests these are barriers to safety as it may lead women to tolerate violence. With this in mind, we developed two evidence-based and innovative projects: "Interweaving/Entretejiendo" and "We are all equal".

"Interweaving" was a series of nine free workshops for Latin American women delivered between July and October 2019 in nine different areas across Metropolitan Melbourne. These workshops were delivered in conjunction with our partners Casa Cultura and Momentum Psychology.

The "We Are All Equal" project was delivered in collaboration with EDVOS and Unpresentable Ego theatre. Five free workshops for Latin American women focused on learning about gender stereotypes, gender inequality and family violence. These workshops took place between September 2019 and March 2020 in five different areas across Victoria.

Innovation is key to Latin Stories Australia and this year has been no exception. Through this report you will be given insight into our innovative approaches. For this, and previous work, our efforts have been recognised. Thank you for believing in us and supporting this dream of advancing multiculturalism and social cohesion in Australia. We celebrate our achievements with you and look forward to delivering our next project "Nuestras Voces" during the next financial year. This project aims to increase participation of senior groups, and engagement between different migrant generations; which will broaden the impact of our work.

Trini Abascal & Cristina Abela  
**Directors**



# Achievements

Our impact

**3 Projects:** Interweaving, We are all equal, Nuestras voces  
**1 Community Event:** Picnic para latinos  
**1 Exhibition:** Building Bridges



**3 awards nominations**  
Shortlisted Victorian Community History Award  
Multicultural Awards for Excellence  
OHTLI Award (Mexican Embassy)



**1 State Government Contract**  
to support our community



**330+** community members  
engaged in our workshops  
/events/ stories

**435+** volunteers/probono  
hours donated

**41** volunteers

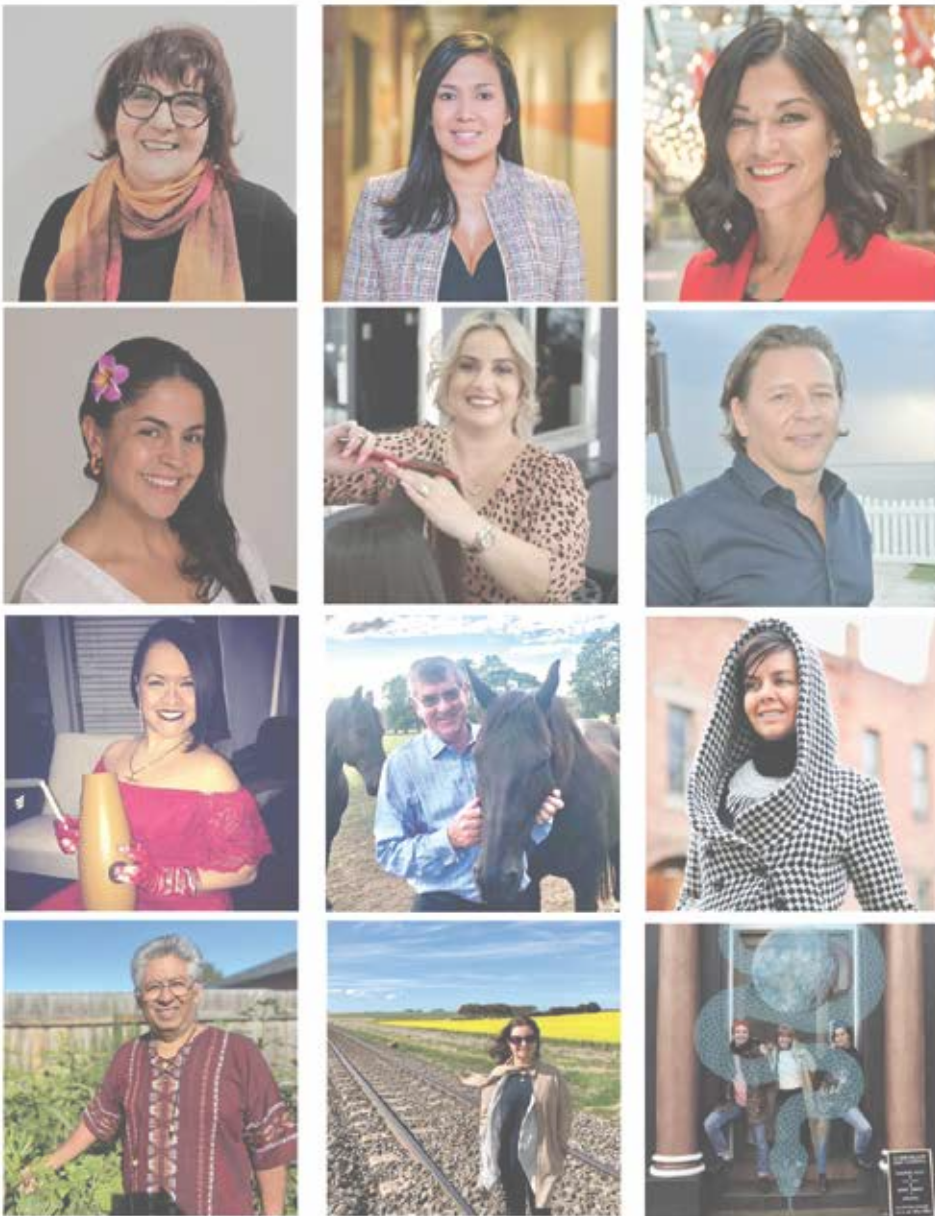
**180** beneficiaries  
free meals /food vouchers



**148,000+** reach  
impressions through the year

# Inspiring Migration Series

2019-2020



11 stories & 1 special article

Featuring 11 women & 3 men

Representing 9 countries

# Entretejiendo Interweaving

## About the project

In 2018, Latin Stories Australia received funding from the Department of Home Affairs Fostering Integration Grants program to develop and facilitate the “interweaving/entretejiendo” project.

The project consisted of a series of workshops aimed to increase social cohesion, empowerment, cultural diversity and sense of belonging among the Latin American women migrant community. The workshops were facilitated in nine different areas in Victoria between July and October 2019 (Brunswick, Footscray, Prahran, Melbourne city, St Albans, Springvale, Werribee, Collingwood and St Kilda).

For this project, we collaborated with Casa Cultura and Momentum Psychology, to co-facilitate the workshops and co-develop a toolkit which was shared with participants and added to our website.



## Goal: Latin American migrant communities are integrated into Australian society

Foster social connection and reduce isolation

Encourage the social, economic and civic participation in Australia

Promote a greater understanding of racial, religious and cultural diversity

Develop migrants sense of belonging and resilience

### Strategy 1:

Workshops with four segments that complement each other

### Strategy 2:

Toolkit for participants with key contact details and support services

### Strategy 3:

Ongoing support through social media platforms

# Key Evaluation Findings

## Interweaving



**131 women** from **14** different **countries of origin** participated in **9 workshops** around Victoria

**98%**

of participants were **satisfied** with the **Interweaving workshops** and would recommend them to their peers

**24 women** volunteered



There was an **increase** of **social connection, sense of belonging & inclusion**

### After the workshops, participants...

**97%** have made new connections

**97%** have more understanding of others' experiences

**95%** have better understanding of sense of belonging and resilience

**92%** reflected on unhealthy patterns contributing to isolation

**88%** have better understanding of Australian values

**88%** have better knowledge on how to adopt Australian values

**86%** have better knowledge on how to participate in Australian life

**88%** have better awareness of social, religious and cultural diversity

*"Specially important was the intergenerational aspect of it"*

*Participant at the Footscray workshop*

*"I learnt that making "Australia" my home is a personal decision and if I change the way I look at myself within this environment, my experience will change"*

*Participant at the St Kilda workshop*



Two participants, as a result of their participation in the workshops, created new initiatives to support women. Through their initiatives, more than 200 women have benefited.



*“Participating in the workshop gave me the encouragement I needed to implement an idea that I have been considering for some time...This workshop was a great catalyst for many personal connections and activities that are starting to unfold in our Latin American community and beyond”*

*Participant at the St Albans workshop*

*“Everything change within me. Now I feel confident about myself and know that I can do things without fear”*

*“I feel safer as I know that I am not alone. I know that I am not the only one who is scare and has insecurities by being in a country so different to ours”*

## About the wrap-up session

In March 2019, Latin Stories Australia developed and facilitated a reflection and learning session with several organisations with the aim to discuss the findings of the “interweaving” workshops and seek collaborations for future projects.

Due to the coronavirus situation, Latin Stories Australia had to be flexible and adjustable to the circumstances to deliver the proposed wrap-up session. We facilitated an online session in collaboration with Casa Cultura, and supported by AMES Australia. In total, 13 participants from nine organisations participated in this session.

## Outcomes of the session

Participants **understood the needs & challenges** of the Latin American women migrant community

**21 new ideas** to support Latin American women migrant community were brainstormed

**New relationships** between organisations were created

*“Interactive technology and clear presentation of research findings”*





## About the workshops

In 2018, Latin Stories Australia received funding from the Victorian Government - Department of Premier and Cabinet to develop and facilitate the “We are all equal” project.

The “we are all equal” project was a series of workshops aimed to increase raise awareness within the Latin American women community on gender stereotypes, gender inequality and family violence and give the participants tools on how to engage in conversations and respond to it. The workshops were facilitated in five different areas in Victoria between September 2019 and March 2020 - including two regional areas (Footscray, Melbourne city, Frankston, Bendigo and Geelong).

For this project, we collaborated with EDVOS and Unpresentable Ego , to co-facilitate the workshops. Latin Stories Australia developed a toolkit which was shared with participants and added to our website.



### Goal: Latin American migrant communities are free from Family Violence

Increase knowledge of what constitutes family violence

Increase knowledge of how to access family violence services

Increase understanding about how to challenge gender stereotypes and norms

#### Strategy 1:

Workshops with three segments: information session, micro-theatre and reflective session

#### Strategy 2:

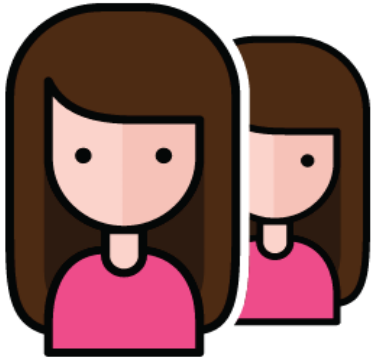
Toolkit for participants with key support services

#### Strategy 3:

Ongoing support through social media platforms

# Key Evaluation Findings

## We Are All Equal



**51 women** from **10** different **countries of origin** participated in **5 workshops** around Victoria

**90%**

of participants were **satisfied** with the **We Are All Equal workshops** and would recommend them to their peers

*“This experience has been amazing because faced you directly to family violence through real experiences”*



There was an **increase** of **Understanding of gender equality & family violence**

### After the workshops, participants have...

**83%**

a high knowledge on gender equality

**90%**

a high awareness and knowledge of family violence

**87%**

a high understanding of ways to support gender equality

**91%**

a high understanding of gender inequality as driver of family violence

**85%**

a high confidence in ability to support actions that break down gender stereotypes

**83%**

a high confidence to recognise signs of family violence

**80%**

a high confidence in ability to change gender stereotypes in their daily life

**91%**

a high knowledge on where to get support around family violence



*Congratulations! It was such a beautiful experiential workshop. It was profound, powerful, clear!*



*It was a great way to reflect on this topic, in a very deep and emotial way. Extraordinary!*





## About the project

In 2019 Latin Stories Australia received funding from the Victorian Government - Department of Premier and Cabinet to develop and facilitate the “Nuestras voces (our voices)” project.

The “Nuestras Voces” project consists of community activities to collect the life stories of the Spanish - speaking migrant communities from the 60s, 70s and 80s.

### Goal: Latin American migrant communities are well connected and participate in society

Increase engagement between different generations of Spanish-speaking communities

Increase participation in society of senior groups and reduce loneliness

Develop a narrative of our history in Victoria

## Deliverables



A documentary film



Podcast series  
*(in collaboration with SBS Radio Spanish)*



A findings report



Community activity

We would like to acknowledge the Steering Committee for their amazing support : Telmo Languiller, Rafaela Torres and Teresa Di Fazio

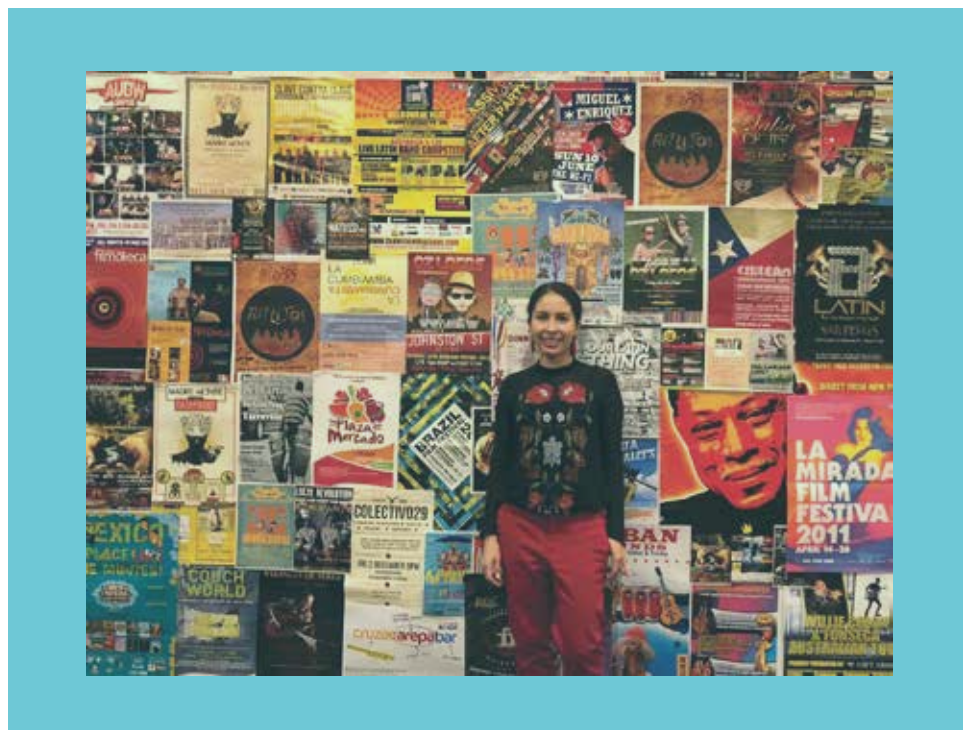
# BUILDING BRIDGES

From Latin American Stories to Victorian History

## About the exhibition

In 2018, Latin Stories Australia launched the exhibition “*From Latin American Stories to Victorian History: Building Bridges*” at No Vacancy Gallery, Melbourne. Due to the success of the exhibition, the organisers of the Ventana Fiesta Festival invited us to exhibit the photographs and the posters of the Building Bridges exhibition at the Frankston Arts Centre as part of the 2020 Ventana Fiesta Festival.

The exhibition celebrates the wonderful impact of the Latin American community on Victoria, as well as its achievements and deeds; in areas such as: education, music, festivals, organisations, art, folk, sports among others.



# COVID-19 initiatives

## Context

In March 2020, the Australian Government took strong measures to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. These measures included self-isolating when possible, only leaving your house to buy essential items. This brought several challenges to our Latin American communities; including for example, stress and anxiety due to the circumstances; those on temporary visas couldn't access any Government support, and isolation, in particular to those already vulnerable.

To respond to the needs of our community, we launched three initiatives:



A fundraising campaign to provide food relief to those, on temporary visas, who are facing financial challenges



Positive messages of resilience to reduce stress and anxiety and provide hope



Collection of books to be donated to the most socially isolated members of our community



# Results

Food relief to Latin Americans with temporary visa holders who are struggling financially

**\$1457** was collected this represented  
**150 free meals**  
through La Tienda restaurante campaign

Through a collaboration with AMES Australia  
**30 food vouchers** were provided



**15** resilience messages  
on **3** different  
social media platforms

Reached **8816** people  
(Facebook & LinkedIn)

**729** people engaged  
(Facebook, Instagram & LinkedIn)

**24 books** were donated

Supporting the elderly:  
UNITED - 11 books

Supporting vulnerable  
women:  
Women's prison - 13 books



# Community Engagement



A community picnic event was organised on a vineyard to encourage **social connection** in the community **between different countries of origin and ages**. In total, 26 adults and 12 children from 7 different countries attended the event.



## Visibility of the achievements of 3 people

who have been previously shared their story with us (Rogel Frankel, Elizabeth Deserbelles and Rafaela Torres). We have been the bridge between **SBS, ABC** and the **Federal Government** and these amazing members of our community.

**AMES Australia** invited us to share a video with a **supportive message** to the community during COVID-19.

**Somos21** published a special article **highlighting the work** Latin Stories Australia does for the community.



During our projects we have collaborated with **7 organisations** (EDVOS, Unpresentable Ego, Casa Cultura, Momentum psychology, Ventana Fiesta, AMES Australia and UNITED-Celas) and **12 very well recognised members of our community**.



## Annual Report 2019-2020

For more information contact  
the Latin Stories Australia Team

E: [latinstoriesaustralia@gmail.com](mailto:latinstoriesaustralia@gmail.com)