

COMUNIDAD SALVADORENA UNIFICADA EN VICTORIA (C.S.U.V.)

THE KENSINGTON - FLEMINGTON SALVADORAN COMMUNITY MURAL PROJECT.



The Kensington Mural Project was initiated in late 1987 by community artworkers, Ben Laycock and Michele Braid, who have an established relationship with the Salvadoran community in Melbourne, and who are interested in participating in the development of the Salvadoran community base locally.

The artworkers had been working within established cultural networks and particularly with the Cuzcatlan cultural group. Cuzcatlan have been promoting the Salvadoran cultural heritage, mainly through dance, for four years.

The broader aim of the Mural Project was to engage young people in cultural enterprise which fuses Salvadoran traditions with activities of significance to life in Australia.

At the same time, activities have been seen as a means of providing an under-resourced section of Melbourne youth with an alternative recreational outlet whilst providing opportunities to develop artistic skills and an avenue for creative expression.

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It was a hope of the C.S.U.V. in its supporting role to the project, that the mural project not only provide an organizational foundation for further community-based cultural activities, but that the project would provide some of that experience which nourishes community development.

C.S.U.V. believes that as the first project of this kind attempted within the relatively recently established Salvadoran Community, that the Mural Project has been successful beyond that which the modest funding received could have allowed us to anticipate.

The concrete result of the project is the beautiful mural at the Kensington Community Health Centre (rear), Henry Street, Kensington which enhances the environment of Kensington and signifies the participation of the young Salvadoran people, and the artworkers, who have produced it.

C.S.U.V. wishes to thank the "RAGE WITHOUT ALCOHOL" campaign of the Health Department of Victoria, and the Art Project Fund of the CAMPAIGN FOR INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION AND DISARMAMENT (CICD) for the financial support with which the Kensington Mural Project was made possible.

The support of the following people is also gratefully acknowledged:

Holland Park Community Centre (Altona Street, Kensington)
Anglican and Uniting Churches (Joint Parish, McCracken Street, Kensington)
Kensington Community Health Centre
Hotchie's Panels (for wall space)
David Evans (Photography)

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DETAILS OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION.

A. PARTICIPANTS

The Project was initiated amongst young Salvadoran people from Kensington and Flemington who were already involved in the Cuzcatlan cultural group, providing a core group of 10-12 people in the target group (ages 12-18 years). This group expanded at times to around 20 participants in skills workshops on week days after school.

However when the actual painting of the mural began in weekend sessions, many of the older people dropped out due to family and social commitments, and participation was most consistent from a group of about 16 younger children (ages 6 - 13 years) who were also living closer to the project site in Kensington.

Ben Laycock and Michele Braid have been involved in a number of community art projects. Of particular significance was a mural completed in 1985 with Nicaraguan children at a small cultural centre in Managua, Nicaragua. They hoped that their valuable experience in community art practice from the Nicaraguan project would translate successfully into the Australian environment.

Ben, Michele and the Salvadoran children were frequently assisted by friends dropping by with advice and "hands on" help.

B. PROJECT TIMETABLE AND ACTIVITIES

The Kensington - Flemington Mural Project was initially intended to commence in Januar 1988 during the school holidays, to be completed before school resumed in Feb/March 1988. This schedule stretched out from mid January till July 1988 corresponding to shortfalls in anticipated financial which saw project activities and co-ordination fitted around the "bread and butter" commitments of artworkers now providing services virtually gratis.

Later delays in painting weekends were caused by rainy days accompanying the onset of winter. Nevertheless the project program with only minor variation from that originally proposed