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**ACTIVITIES  
FOR OLDER PEOPLE  
IN  
THE CITY OF MANNINGHAM**

May 2001

This paper is a description of a study carried out by Dr Jack Darmody and Dr Leslie Dale in February to April 2001 for the Manningham City Council.

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# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

## ***OLDER PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA***

The percentage of people over 65 years of age in Australia is expected to increase from 11.7% of the total population in 1993 to up to 22% in 2041. In the City of Manningham the present numbers over 60 (about 18,700) is expected to increase to 25,000 by 2011 and even further beyond that year.

Government policy, "Ageing in Place", is designed to ease future pressure on hostel and nursing home accommodation, a demand that government will not be able to meet in its budget allocations. With that policy comes the realisation that those who continue to live at home require a great deal of support.

They need opportunities for physical activity, intellectual stimulation, learning new things, meeting new people, keeping up to date, developing new interests and enjoying what they do. Such opportunities can be provided by community organizations.

This study enables us to see what is happening in one local government area, the City of Manningham.

## ***THE CITY OF MANNINGHAM***

Manningham includes the suburbs of Bulleen, Doncaster, Doncaster East, Donvale, Lower Templestowe, Park Orchards, Templestowe, Warrandyte and Wonga Park.

People in Manningham are relatively well off socioeconomically although approximately half of those over 60 are on a full or part age pension.

About 35% of all people in the municipality were born overseas and about one third speak a language other than English at home.

Other information on Manningham's older citizens was obtained from many sources including Manningham publications, Council officers, the Bureau of Statistics and surveys carried out within the municipality.

The extent to which community organizations provide opportunities for older people to participate and the extent to which the activities provided are meeting the needs of older people in the municipality are the subjects of this investigation.

## ***THE INVESTIGATION***

The age group studied was 50 and over.

Two questionnaires were distributed to about 120 selected organizations. One was to obtain information from the organizations. The other was to obtain information from ten people who were members or participants in activities conducted by each organization. Completed questionnaires were returned from 57 organizations and 416 individuals

## ***SUMMARY OF FINDINGS***

1. About 3200 older people were members of organizations.
2. Most (88%) of the older members of organizations were in Senior Citizens, Probus and Adult Community Education.
3. Most (84%) of the members of Senior Citizens were in organizations providing activities for people from non-English speaking backgrounds.
4. Most of the older members in Adult Community Education were in U3A. (Most Adult Community Education organizations do not have members but enroll people in activities.)
5. On average, each respondent was a member of 1.9 organizations.
6. Most (86%) of the responding organizations had older people working with them as unpaid workers in management, as activity leaders and in other ways.
7. About half (47%) of the respondents were doing unpaid work.
8. About 3300 older people took part in activities conducted by organizations in the City of Manningham.
9. Only 71% of the individual respondents actually participated in activities run by any organization in the City of Manningham.
10. On average, each respondent that participated did so in 2.3 kinds of activity.
11. Many (40%) respondents mentioned barriers that made it difficult or impossible to participate in activities.
12. The barriers mentioned included lack of time, cost, poor health, not knowing where activities are held, and not having anyone to go with.
13. Most (81%) of the organizations reported that the demand for participation from older people was either static or increasing.
14. Factors that made it difficult for organizations to provide more activities for older people included finding enough older people to participate or to help run the organization and the activities, finding suitable accommodation, funding the costs involved and providing transport to participants.

## **DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS**

With the above information in mind and in the wider context of increasing numbers of older people and the benefits of keeping bodies and minds active it is interesting to look at the finding that only about 3300 people over 50 (which includes about 3000 over 60) are actually taking part in activities run by organizations in the City of Manningham. The question "What are the others doing?" immediately comes to mind.

There is little doubt that older people can be very selective when choosing what they want to do during their years of retirement. They can also be very particular about the conditions under which they are prepared to participate. But other factors may predominate. Many individuals have mentioned barriers to participation. If it were possible to overcome at least some of these barriers, more people would be able and might be willing to join in.

The barrier which seems to be affecting most people is cost. Half of the estimated 18,700 people over 60 in the municipality are on an age pension. Most of those would have little discretionary income to spare once they have paid for their essential goods and services.

Approximately 3000 people aged 60 and over are participating in activities but the number of participants who are age pensioners is not known.

It seems that there are around 7000 people over 60 who not accounted for. Who they are and what they are doing can only be guessed at. A reasonable assumption is that a substantial number could be very busily engaged in organizations and activities outside the City of Manningham. It is also reasonable to assume that there is a substantial number of people over 60 who are active, healthy people who do not need any assistance or prompting about how they should run their lives. They come from all income ranges but all need enough discretionary income to be able to do what they want to do.

Barriers to participation limit the choices that can be made. In that respect, it seems that the low income earners in particular need special consideration.

### ***IMPLICATIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONS***

The organizations providing most of the activities for older people are Senior Citizens, Probus and U3A. The challenge is for them to do more, in some cases providing more activities or more appropriate activities. Access could be improved to allow more older people to join in. It may be possible to overcome some of the barriers to participation. Cooperative arrangements between organizations may be possible. In some cases, support may be needed.

### ***IMPLICATIONS FOR MANNINGHAM CITY COUNCIL***

The challenge for Council is how to assist organizations to make better provision of activities for older people in the municipality.

The organizations have stated the difficulties they have to overcome in order to be able to offer more activities. The participants have stated the barriers that make it difficult for them to participate.

The whole community will benefit if ways can be found to support the organizations concerned.

### ***RECOMMENDATION***

Many older people are members of at least two organizations. Commonly, the organizations concerned include Probus, Senior Citizens and U3A. With this in mind, **we recommend that Council form a working group to examine the findings of this investigation and recommend action that might be taken to increase opportunities for older people to participate in community activities in the City of Manningham.**

# **ACTIVITIES FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN THE CITY OF MANNINGHAM**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **OLDER PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA**

Much has been said about changes to be expected in the age composition of the Australian population due to factors including the baby boom in the 1940s to 1960s, increased longevity due to medical advances and a static or falling birthrate. Projections indicate that the percentage of young people 0-14 years of age will fall from 21.7% in 1993 to possibly less than 19% in 2041. The percentage of 15 to 64 year olds is expected to fall even further from 66.6% in 1993 to possibly 61%. On the other hand, the 65+ age group will increase considerably both in numbers and percentage, from 11.7% in 1993 to up to 22% in 2041.<sup>(2)</sup>

The ratio of the number of dependants over 65 to the number of people of working age will increase from 17.5 to close to 40.<sup>(2)</sup> This is serious for government as the fall in revenue from taxation, combined with the increase in numbers of older people, will make it very difficult to maintain the provision of nursing home and hostel beds at the rate needed to keep pace with the expected demand.

Government policy, "Ageing in Place", now promotes continuing living at home by the aged in order to ameliorate the effect of the expected growth in numbers. With that policy is a realization that those who continue to live at home will require a great deal of support, physical, medical and psychological. They will need to have opportunities for improved social contacts and quality of life, to continue working whether paid or unpaid, to continue learning and to maintain their feelings of well-being and independence.

They will need opportunities for physical activity, intellectual stimulation, learning new things, meeting new people, keeping up to date, developing new interests, finding companionship and understanding, and enjoying what they do. Such opportunities can be provided by community organizations.

Most of the studies on older people have been carried out by medical researchers and are about to health issues. Few studies relate to the benefits to be gained by older people through participation in learning and other activities.

This study, Activities for Older People in the City of Manningham, enables us to see what is happening in one particular local government area. It sheds some light on the role of organizations in the community in providing opportunities for participation by older people.

### **THE CITY OF MANNINGHAM AND ITS RESIDENTS**

The City of Manningham is 12 kilometres north east from the centre of the City of Melbourne. It has an area of 113 square kilometers and includes the suburbs of Bulleen, Doncaster, Doncaster East, Donvale, Lower Templestowe, Park Orchards, Templestowe, Warrandyte and Wonga Park.

In 1996 (the year of the last census) the population of the City was recorded as 112,021 people with the age distribution as shown in Tables 1 and 2.<sup>(1)</sup>

**Table 1: Population of Manningham in 1996**

<i>All people</i>	<i>Age groups</i>			
	<b>0-17</b>	<b>18-34</b>	<b>35-49</b>	<b>50 and over</b>
<b>112,021</b>	23.1%	25.2%	22.1%	29.6%

**Table 2: Number of residents over 50**

<b>Over 50s</b>	<b>50-59</b>	<b>60-69</b>	<b>70-79</b>	<b>80+</b>
<b>Number</b>	15,219	8768	4464	2130
<b>Percentage</b>	50%	28.5%	14.5%	7%

The population growth rate is estimated at 3.4% per annum. The population in 1999 of those between 50 and 59 was estimated at 17,400 and there were 18,700 over 60.<sup>(1)</sup>

***Manningham has an ageing population ...***

The percentage of over 60s (14.9% in 1996 – approx 15,500 people) is expected to increase to 23.1% (25,000 people) by the year 2011.<sup>(3)</sup> Of these, the greatest increase in numbers is expected to be in the 80 and over age group.

Of the people over 60 years of age in 2001, around 700 (4.5%) are in retirement villages, 600 (3.9%) are in special accommodation and hostels, and 200 (1.3%) are in nursing homes.<sup>(5)</sup>

***... which is relatively well off socio-economically***

More people in Manningham own their own homes (58.5%) than in any other Melbourne municipality and they have higher than average car ownership levels (65.7% of households have two vehicles or more).<sup>(3)</sup>

Manningham residents are relatively highly skilled and educated with a median weekly income of \$368, well above the State average of \$290.<sup>(3)</sup>

***... and culturally diverse***

65.4% of Manningham residents were born in Australia and there is a higher than average proportion of those born overseas. Most of those born overseas come from United Kingdom (3.9%), Greece (3.5%), Italy (4.4%), Hong Kong (2.8%), Malaysia (2%) and other countries (5%). Approximately one third of Manningham residents speak a language other than English at home.<sup>(3)</sup>

***... although many older people are on the age pension***

Compared with Victoria as a whole in which 10.4% of the population is on an age pension, Manningham is relatively better off with approximately 8% of its residents on the pension. Of the 9530 residents receiving the pension, 5425 are on the full pension.<sup>(7)</sup>

## **INFORMATION ON THE PREFERENCES OF OLDER PEOPLE IN THE CITY**

### ***Participation in cultural and leisure activities***

During 1996 and 1997 a Cultural and Leisure survey was carried out on randomly selected households in the city to determine levels of participation. 1011 people responded.<sup>(4)</sup>

By far the most popular activity mentioned by respondents was walking (36% of responses). Next in popularity came swimming, tennis, cycling, going to the movies, going to live theatre (10-13%). Then came reading, gardening, eating out, golf, shopping, dog walking (all 5 to 9%). Low percentages (2-3%) of mention included going to church, lawn bowls, jogging, watching sports, watching TV and video, craft and club based activities.

The main reasons for not participating were given as:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| “too far from home” (33%)                  | “I have other responsibilities” (32%)     |
| “I have no information about it” (30%)     | “too expensive” (23%)                     |
| “I do not know anyone else doing it” (23%) | “not offered when I have free time” (19%) |

### ***Older people in retirement villages***

A survey of people in retirement villages and others who were clients of Aged and Disability Support Services in the City of Manningham was reported in February 2001.<sup>(5)</sup> The total number in the retirement villages studied was 599 and 121 others were also involved.

- Of the 301 respondents 218 were women and 69 were men.
- 7% were under 70, 125 were between 70 and 79 and 153 were over 80.
- 60% of respondents lived alone and 57% drove their own cars. 42% were unable to drive.
- 37% rated their health as good or very good. 62% said their health was average or poor.
- 63% were members of social or sporting groups with church, Probus, bowls, senior citizens clubs and U3A being the most popular.
- Reasons for not participating included health, lack of interest, transport difficulties, inconvenience, enough activities within the village and lack of an appropriate cultural group.
- 33% said they were often or sometimes lonely.
- 45% said that they did not want to socialize more than they were currently.
- 47% said they did not want to exercise more.
- 30% said that there were enough activities in the City of Manningham. 6% said there were not enough and 64% were not sure.
- The most popular activity listed was day trips (33% of respondents) followed by film/theatre (28%), gardening, music and luncheon (each 23%), walking and art/craft (each 19%), travel/history (18%), and reading and knitting (each 13%).

### ***Seniors sports program***

During 2000 the Manningham City Council organized a seniors sports day, offering a range of activities in which seniors could participate. Approximately 250 people attended. Emphasis was on social participation.<sup>(1)</sup>

Those who attended were offered a survey form to complete and 83 people stated that they would like to play one of more sports on a regular basis. In order of popularity they listed strength training (45%), table tennis, swimming, aerobics (35%), badminton (19%), newcomb (11%), squash (8%) and tennis (4%).

Given the choice of offering to pay up to \$5 per session, 59% chose \$1 or \$2.

Less than 15% were aware of clubs that offered the sports they had nominated, 67% asked for more information and 80% said they were prepared to join a club in order to participate. 84% said they would participate at least once a week.

### ***Adult community education***

There are five registered providers of Adult Community Education in the City of Manningham. In 1999, 2.4% of the 50-59 age group in the municipality (73% women) and 3.8% of the over 60s (50% women) participated in adult community education.<sup>(8)</sup> Most of these took general adult education type courses which are not designed to lead to provide further qualifications or to lead to employment. (General adult education courses are sometimes referred to as hobby and recreation courses.)

### **THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

The above studies provided some insights into why older people may or may not be participating in activities conducted by organizations in the municipality. They do not indicate which organizations in the municipality provide opportunities for older people to participate, in what ways they can participate, the range of activities the organizations provide, how many older people are participating and the characteristics of those who do.

The extent to which community organizations provide opportunities for older people to participate and the extent to which the activities provided are meeting the needs of older people in the City of Manningham are the subjects of this investigation.

# THE INVESTIGATION

The investigation into activities provided by community organizations for older people in the City of Manningham was carried out in February-March 2001. Its purposes were to determine

- which organizations provided opportunities for older people to participate as volunteers or in organized activities, the extent and types of activities provided, levels of participation, and how the organizations resourced that provision,
- the extent to which individuals who were active participants actually took part and barriers to their participation,
- characteristics of the people who took part.

The age group studied was those aged 50 and over.

Two questionnaires were prepared, one to obtain information from organizations in the municipality and one to obtain information from older individuals who were participating in activities conducted by each organization.

Each organization was asked to arrange for ten individual questionnaires to be completed and returned. To assist those who could not read English, it was suggested that the questionnaires should be filled in by others who could do so, entering information for the individuals concerned.

The questionnaires were distributed to approximately 120 organizations, selected in the belief that each might be providing activities in which older people were participating. In addition, notices were placed in the local press inviting other organizations and individuals to provide information.

Sports organizations were not included as a seniors sports program is currently being organized by the Manningham City Council.

Completed questionnaires were returned from 57 organizations. Seven others responded that they did not have enough older people to justify a return or that the survey was not relevant to them. Completed questionnaires were returned by 416 individuals.

## **Interpretation of the data collected**

The organizations that responded were checked against the list of organizations selected to receive questionnaires. In general, almost all of those directly concerned with older people, such as the Senior Citizens Clubs, and most of those who were known to offer programs designed for older people, such as Probus Clubs, responded. It is therefore possible to have reasonable confidence in the validity of the data provided and to be able to extrapolate from it, where necessary, to obtain an overall picture of what organizations in the municipality offer to older people.

A substantial quantity of data was contributed by individual participants and this contains much valuable information. However, the way in which that data was obtained has built-in constraints on its interpretation and on extrapolation from it to a wider population. Interpretation must take into account that

- the individuals who responded are not a random sample of the population of all older residents in the municipality

- more responses were received from the more popular organizations such as the Probus Clubs and Senior Citizens Centres. Generalizations from these groups to a wider population needs therefore to be done with caution.
- the views of all respondents in a group cannot be represented as the views of all participants in organized activities.
- the people who responded were those who were active participants and, from among that group, those interested in responding. Other participants may be less active and less willing to seek out opportunities for further participation.

## **FINDINGS**

### **THE ORGANIZATIONS**

The majority of those organizations concerned primarily with the provision of activities for older people responded. Many other organizations provided opportunities for participation but did so incidentally to the main purpose of the organization.

In order to facilitate the analysis and interpretation of information received, the organizations were divided into six groups according to their nature and purposes. The groups in alphabetical order are Adult Community Education (Aducom), Church, Probus, Senior Citizens (Sencit), Service and Support (Sersup), and Single Interest (Sinint). The abbreviations in brackets are used in the following descriptions of findings.

Two organization did not fit comfortably into the groups. One was a retirement village and retirement villages were not surveyed. The other was a social and sporting club which also were not included in this survey. As far as practicable, data provided by those two groups were taken into account in the overall findings but were excluded from the findings referring to the above six organization groups.

Seven organizations responded, saying that they did not have enough older people to warrant a return or the survey was not relevant to them.

The names of all the organizations that responded and their positions in the six groups are shown in the Appendix.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE**

The age distribution of the respondents in the sample, expressed as a percentage of all over 60, is shown in Table 3. It is very similar to that of the City of Manningham for the 60 and over age group.

*Table 3: Percentage of age group respondents aged 60 and over*

	60-69	70-79	80+
<i>Sample</i>	53%	34.4%	12.6%
<i>City</i>	57%	29%	14%

However, if the comparison is made for all people over 50, as in Table 4, a much lower representation of the 50-59 age group becomes apparent.

**Table 4: Percentage of age group respondents 50 and over**

	50-59	60-69	70-79	80+
<i>Sample</i>	13.7%	45.7%	29.7%	10.8%
<i>% in city 1996</i>	50%	28.9%	14.6%	7%
<i>Numbers 1996</i>	15,219	8,768	4,464	2,130

This finding is to be expected as most of the 50-59 age group will have commitments that limit their capacity to participate in community activities. It is interesting to note that the numbers are approximately halved from one age group to the next. There were about 2000 people in the city over 80 in 1996.

The representation of country of birth is shown in Table 5. The figures for the sample and the city are again very similar, the main difference being in the higher representation in the sample of those born in UK. In the 'Other countries' category the representation of those from China, Hong Kong and Malaysia is significantly lower (2.4%) than those in the City (4.8%).

**Table 5: Country of birth of respondents**

<i>Born in</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>City</i>
<i>Australia</i>	66.6%	65.4%
<i>UK</i>	10.3%	3.9%
<i>Italy</i>	5.5%	4.4%
<i>Greece/Macedonia</i>	3.6%	3.5%
<i>Other countries</i>	12.9%	9.8%

These correspondences enable certain generalizations to be made from the sample to the wider population with a higher level of confidence than previously anticipated, taking into account the relatively low representation of the 50-59 age group and people from Chinese speaking countries, and the higher representation of people from UK.

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR OLDER PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE**

Many organizations in the City of Manningham provide opportunities for older persons to participate as members or as unpaid workers or in activities conducted by that organization. About 20 of the organizations that responded focus on older people and provide only for them. These organizations are to be found in the Senior Citizens, Probus and Adult Community Education groups.

## PARTICIPATION AS MEMBERS OF ORGANIZATIONS

The organizations that responded to the request for information had a total membership of 5627 people over 50 years of age.

The numbers and percentages of members in the six organization groups are shown in Table 6.

*Table 6: Members in the six organization groups*

Senior Citizens	2253	39%
*Adult Community Education	1358	24%
Probus	874	15%
*Church	582	10%
*Single interest	369	6%
*Service and support	317	6%
Total	5753	100%

*\*many of the organizations in these groups enroll their participants and do not have members as such*

The majority of the members (76%) were in Senior Citizens, Probus and Adult Community Education.

Of those in Senior Citizens, most (84%) were in organizations providing for people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Of those in Adult Community Education, most (77%) were in Manningham U3A.

Only 10 of the 16 Probus clubs in the city supplied information so there were at least another 500 members in the remaining Probus clubs. Thus there is a total of at least 6100 older members in all Manningham organizations.

**Data from individuals** enabled differences in participation between sexes and between age groups to be examined. The differences are shown in Table 7. Women are participating more than men in all age groups.

(Note that in this table and future tables, “% of women” is a comparison between numbers of women and men participating.)

*Table 7: Age and sex differences in participation as members of organizations*

	50-59	60-69	70-79	80+	Overall
Percentage of members	14%	45%	30%	11%	100%
% of women members	72%	60%	61%	60%	62%

The percentages of members in each age group for each organization group are shown in Table 8.

**Table 8: Percentages of members by age in each organization group**

	50-59	60-69	70-79	80+	Overall
*Adult community education	32%	57%	5%	7%	24%
*Church	21%	41%	22%	16%	10%
Probus	1%	43%	50%	4%	15%
Senior Citizens	8%	42%	35%	15%	39%
*Service/support	21%	37%	32%	10%	6%
*Single interest	13%	62%	22%	3%	6%
<b>Overall average</b>	14%	45%	30%	11%	100%

*\*Many participants are not members*

On average, each individual respondent belonged to 1.9 organizations. This means that the previous figure of 6100 members of organizations represents about 3200 people.

There were no significant differences between the joining rates of women and men, only small differences between the age groups and only small differences between the organization groups.

In order of popularity, the kinds of organizations to which individuals belonged were clubs (75% of all respondents), a church (40%), a sports organization or senior citizens club (each 20%), art/craft (16%), music/theatre (5%).

### **Club membership**

Overall, 75% of all respondents were club members with an average of 0.8 clubs per respondent. That is, on average, eight out of every ten respondents were members of clubs.

The organization groups with above average club membership were Probus (1.2), Aducom and Sersup (1.0, 0.9). Organization groups with low club membership were Sinint (0.4), Church and Sencit (0.3). (It should be noted that an average greater than 1.0 means that respondents other than those in the group concerned were also members.)

By far the most popular kind of club was Probus (28% of the sample), with a big drop to U3A (9%), RSL 6%, a community house or CWA 5% and a historical society 4%. Note that the accuracy of the lower percentages (4-6%) is open to question due to the method of sampling.

### **Church membership**

Overall, 40% of all respondents were church members with an average of 0.4 churches per respondent. That is, on average, four out every ten respondents were church members.

Organizations with above average church membership included Church (1.0) and Sencit (0.6). Those below average were Aducom and Sersup (both 0.2).

The church with highest membership was Anglican (12% of respondents), followed by Catholic and Uniting (8%), Orthodox 6%, Baptist 5%, Church of Christ 2%. (These figures may not be reliable due to the nature of the sampling method.)

### **Membership of sports groups**

Overall, 20% of all respondents were members of sports groups, averaging 0.2 per respondent.

The most popular sports organization was bushwalking (5% of all respondents). Bowls, Tennis and Golf were each mentioned by 3% of all respondents. All other sports were much lower.

### **Membership of Senior Citizens groups**

Overall, 20% of all respondents were members of senior citizens groups with an average of 0.2 groups per respondent. That is, on average, two out of every ten respondents were members of senior citizens groups.

Of those who were members of senior citizens groups, 72% were in groups of people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Less than 4% of respondents from other organization groups were also members of a senior citizens group.

### **Membership of Art and Craft groups**

Overall, 16% of all respondents were members of art or craft groups, the average membership per respondent being 0.2.

Most of the members (74%) were in the Sinint organization group. Approximately 4% of members of other organization groups were members of an art or craft group.

The most popular kind of group was described by respondents as Art (4% of all respondents), followed by Artist (3%), then Spinners and Weavers or Camera Club or Craft (each 2%).

### **Membership of Music, Film and Theatre groups**

Overall, 5% of all respondents were members of music or film or theatre groups, with less than one in ten of all respondents involved.

The most popular kinds of groups were theatre and repertory (2%) with others mentioned being choir or singing, music and dancing (each 1%). However, the numbers involved are so small that little reliance can be placed on the accuracy of these percentages.

The above figures on membership are useful as an indicator of participation but they are not complete as they do not take into account many people who are not members and are participating by enrolling in an activity. Of the organizations that provided data, 8 of the 57 did not provide membership numbers suggesting that they do not have members as such. At least two of these enrolled many older people in their activities.

## PARTICIPATION AS VOLUNTEERS

Most (86%) of the responding organizations indicated that they had older people working with them as unpaid workers. The numbers and percentages are shown in Table 9.

**Table 9: Percentage of organizations with volunteers and numbers participating as volunteers**

	<i>% of organizations</i>	<i>no. of volunteers</i>	<i>% women</i>
<i>In management</i>	82%	457	60%
<i>As activity leaders</i>	60%	364	53%
<i>In other ways</i>	53%	1046	67%
<i>Total or % of total</i>	86%	1867	63%

The percentages of the totals contributed by each organization group are shown in Table 10.

**Table 10: Percentages of voluntary workers in each organization group**

	<i>Aducom</i>						
	<i>U3A</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Church</i>	<i>Probus</i>	<i>Sencit</i>	<i>Sersup</i>	<i>Sinint</i>
<i>Management</i>	4	4	17	18	17	23	17
<i>As leaders</i>	19	8	35	16	8	4	11
<i>Other ways</i>	50	1	14	12	5	8	10
<i>% of total</i>	<b>32</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>

These figures show there are opportunities for older persons to work as voluntary, unpaid helpers in all six categories of organization. All offer leadership opportunities as well as openings to assist in other ways.

**Data from individuals** indicated that about half (47%) of the respondents were doing unpaid work, with approximately equal numbers of men and women. Of those doing unpaid work, the average contribution per person was 6 hours per week with women doing a little more (6.3 hours) than men (5.2 hours).

Taking the sample (416 persons only) as a whole, their contribution to organizations in the City of Manningham is a total of approximately 46,000 hours of unpaid work over one year, in excess of 100 hours per person on average.

## PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY ORGANIZATIONS

On the organization questionnaire, the following list of kinds of activities was used.

Sport, fitness or outdoor activities	Language studies
Personal development activities	Music, dance or choir
Learning to use a computer	Hobby or recreational
Learning to use an ATM, paying accounts by phone	Trips or travel
Art, craft, theatre or film activities	Other

The organizations were asked to state how many people participated in each of the kinds of activities over a period of one month. The numbers given are shown in Table 11.

**Table 11: Numbers of participants in the various kinds of activities provided by each organization group**

	<i>Aducom</i>		<i>Church</i>	<i>Probus</i>	<i>Sencit</i>	<i>Sersup</i>	<i>Sinint</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>
	<i>U3A</i>	<i>Other</i>							
<i>Sport, fitness</i>	126	219	7	115	562	19	0	1067	14%
<i>Personal dev</i>	249	37	83	38	40	9	12	468	6%
<i>Computer</i>	99	218	0	21	0	0	4	352	5%
<i>Art, craft</i>	148	187	55	254	155	65	217	1106	15%
<i>Language</i>	87	81	65	3	45	0	0	281	4%
<i>Music, dance</i>	76	5	11	82	564	40	123	901	12%
<i>Hobby</i>	85	47	24	156	641	39	285	1277	17%
<i>Trips</i>	0	45	24	443	598	85	28	1282	17%
<i>Other</i>	173	21	547	175	0	69	48	1033	14%
<i>Total</i>	1043	751	854	1288	2595	315	717	7563	100%
<b><i>% participants</i></b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

The totals show that the groups with the highest numbers of participants in the activities they conduct are senior citizens which has 34% of all participants, adult community education (24%) and Probus (17%). These three groups provide for 75% of all participation by older people. This is not surprising as both senior citizens and Probus provide activities specifically for older people and adult community education contains Manningham U3A which also provides activities specifically for older people. It has high numbers of participants.

**Data from individuals** show that only 71% of the respondents were actually participating in activities run by organizations. Apparently the remainder are either too highly committed already or they attend meetings and lunches or dinners but do not join in other activities.

The participation rate for those participating was 2.3 kinds of activity per person.

Data analyzed by age group showed participation rates as in Table 12. The figures refer to the kinds of activities in which individuals were participating. They include activities conducted by more than one organization.

**Table 12: Participation of all respondents by age expressed as percentage of all activities and number of activities per person**

	Age Group			
	50-59	60-69	70-79	80+
Percentage of all activities	13%	52%	27%	8%
Kinds of activity per person	1.5	1.8	1.5	1.2

Percentages for individuals from the six organization groups, for those who are participating, are shown in Table 13.

**Table 13: Percentages of those participating, kinds of activity per person and percentage women for each of the organization groups**

	Overall	Aducom	Church	Probus	Sencit	Sersup	Sinint
% of the group participating	71%	89%	57%	80%	71%	56%	97%
Kinds of activity per person	2.3	2.5	2.2	2.7	1.9	1.3	2.0
% women participating	65%	85%	75%	59%	35%	66%	80%

When participation according to type of activity is examined, taking into account the relative numbers of women and men participating, the results shown in Table 14 are obtained. This table gives a comparison between the data provided by the organizations and that provided by individuals. Big differences in percentages indicate that individuals were participating in activities run by organizations other than those surveyed, some of which may be outside the City of Manningham.

**Table 14: Kinds of activities with percentages of all participants and of women: a comparison data from organizations and individuals**

	% of all participants		% women	
	organization	individual	organization	individual
Trips and travel	17%	32%	64%	59%
Hobby and recreational	17%	20%	64%	62%
Art, craft, theatre, film	15%	31%	77%	81%
Sport, fitness and outdoor	14%	33%	58%	63%
Music, dance, choir	12%	11%	67%	59%
Personal development	6%	9%	78%	72%
Learning to use a computer	5%	15%	67%	59%
Language studies	4%	4%	61%	75%
Other activities	*14%	2%	64%	57%
Total participating	100%		68%	65%

(\*this figure includes 7% from churches and 2% from U3A)

The most popular types of activities are the first five on the list although there is need for a word of caution as these could be the kinds of activities that are most readily available or the most accessible.

Women are clearly in the majority for each type of activity, particularly for art, craft, theatre and film and personal development. They are in lesser percentages in sport, fitness and outdoor, language studies and trips and travel.

An overall caution applying to the interpretation of these results is that many people participate in more than one kind of activity and in more than one organization group. This means that the actual numbers of people participating could be no more than half of the total numbers shown in Table 11 while still being accurate for any individual type of activity or organization group.

The significance of these figures for the individual organizations concerned can be determined only by those organizations. Only they know what activities they conduct and the responses of those who participate. Some insights into the need for possible changes may be obtained but in many cases the results appear to be consistent with the nature of the organization and its purposes and do not necessarily reflect on how well the organization is being managed.

### **How many people were participating?**

Table 11 shows a total of 7563 activities in which older people participated. When the participation rate of 2.3 activities per person is taken into account, the number of people participating is thus around 3300.

This figure is very close to that for the number of people who are members of organizations (around 3200) and can now be accepted as a reasonable estimate of the numbers of older people participating in community organizations in the City of Manningham both as members and as participants in activities.



## **ACTIVITIES IN WHICH RESPONDENTS WOULD HAVE LIKED TO PARTICIPATE**

The question was worded “I would like to participate in activities like the following but have been unable to do so”. Some of those who responded also indicated that the reason why they had been unable to participate was lack of available time due to various kinds of commitments such as employment or family obligations or because they had a physical disability or a health problem. This needs to be kept in mind when the answers given are examined.

Overall, only 15% of the respondents answered this question. This appears to indicate that the vast majority have been able to participate according to individual preferences.

Of the answers given, the percentages of the respondents responding were so low that little credibility can be placed in the figures given below.

The highest frequency of mention (3% of all respondents) were exercise or gym and using a computer.

Next (2%) came dancing, swimming, art, cooking, Tai Chi, and travel or trips.

Below 2% were languages, music/theatre, walking, sport, fishing, golf, poetry/writing, bridge, local history, craft, pottery, water aerobics, work with children, study, camping, health talks, genealogy and spinning.

## **BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION**

The above findings appear to indicate that the organizations in the City of Manningham provide ample opportunities for older people to participate in one way or another. However, in the data from individuals many respondents (40% of all respondents) mentioned factors that made it difficult or impossible for them to participate. The fact that 29% of the respondents did not participate in any of the activities listed is pertinent.

The overall average number of barriers mentioned was 0.4 per respondent. That is, only 4 out of ten indicated barriers to participation. Many respondents ignored this part of the questionnaire. Perhaps they did so because they were able to participate without any barriers worth mentioning. However, the respondents were active participants who had overcome most of the barriers to participation. Older people who were not active participants may present a very different view.

Of those who did respond, the highest number of barriers to participation was given by respondents in the Adult Community Education group (2.3 barriers per person on average), followed by Church respondents (1.6), Senior Citizens (1.3), Service and Support (0.8), Probus (0.7) and Single Interest (0.6).

The main barriers to participation mentioned were time, cost, poor health, lack of knowledge about where activities are held, and the absence of someone to go with. A detailed breakdown of barriers mentioned by each organization group is provided in Table 15. The table shows the percentages of mention made of each barrier by members of each organization group.

**Table 15: Percentages of mention of each barrier**

	<i>Aducom</i>	<i>Church</i>	<i>Probus</i>	<i>Sencit</i>	<i>Sersup</i>	<i>Sinint</i>	<i>Overall</i>
<i>Cost</i>	23%	8%	1%	18%	4%	6%	9%
<i>No one to go with</i>	18%	10%	4%	9%	10%	2%	8%
<i>Not know where</i>	9%	10%	4%	20%	4%	7%	8%
<i>Not well enough</i>	7%	10%	4%	15%	8%	2%	8%
<i>Can't get there</i>	11%	13%	3%	4%	3%	3%	5%
<i>No one provides it</i>	0%	3%	1%	13%	1%	2%	4%
<i>No time</i>	25%	44%	39%	23%	25%	14%	29%
<i>Average barriers per person</i>	2.3	1.6	0.7	1.3	0.8	0.6	0.4

**Not having enough time** was mentioned by 29% of all respondents. Reasons for this may be partly related to the fact that some (16%) were employed full or part time. Others indicated that they were fully committed and could not do more. Some commented on family or care responsibilities that limited their free time.

Some 15% indicated that they would have liked to participate to a greater extent. Many indicated that they intended to do so when freed from their present commitments. The percentages of respondents still in employment are shown in Table 16.

**Table 16: Percentages still in employment**

	<i>50-59</i>	<i>60-69</i>	<i>70-79</i>	<i>80+</i>	<i>Overall</i>
<i>% fully retired</i>	56%	78%	97%	100%	84%
<i>% working part-time</i>	25%	14%	3%	0%	10%
<i>% working full-time</i>	19%	8%	0%	0%	6%

On an organization group basis, the lowest percentage of those fully retired was in the Sersup group (67%) and the highest in Probus (95%). The Church group had 79%, Sinint 86% and Sencit 91%.

**A shortage of funds** to pay for membership or enrolment or other activity costs was indicated by some (21%) of the respondents who stated that they had little money to spare after meeting the basic costs of living. These were in all age groups comprising 18% of the 50-69, 23% of 70-79 and 35% of the over 80s. A comparison of the percentages of women in this group with those in the same age group in the sample suggests that older women, in particular, are more affected by shortage of funds than men.

An examination of the responses by organization group showed that the Senior Citizens were most affected by the low income barrier, having 37% of all participants who stated that they had little money to spare after meeting basic costs. Church (29%), Adult Community Education (26%) and Service/Support (18%) had fewer low income participants. Probus (10%) and Sinint (6%) had the lowest percentages.

Those who indicated that they are not limited in participation by lack of money (30%) and those who indicated that they can afford to do many things (49%) are clearly in the majority (eight out of every ten respondents) in the sample. This can be partly attributed to the fact that Manningham people are reasonably affluent but perhaps more so because people who can afford to do things are more likely to participate in the kinds of community activities that involve significant costs.

**Health and disability**

Of the factors that restrict older people from participation in community activities, health and disability is predominant. Those in poor health are least able to participate. Of the sample, 41% rated their health as excellent, 55% said it was reasonable to good and only 4% said they had poor health.

In Table 17, this data is looked at by age group. The expected trend of decline in health quality with age is obvious, particularly in the category of “excellent”. It does not show up in “poor” because it is highly probable that as health deteriorates many drop out of participation in community activities.

**Table 17: Health self-rating percentages by each age group**

	50-59	60-69	70-79	80+	Overall
<i>Excellent</i>	60%	45%	33%	20%	41%
<i>Reasonable to good</i>	38%	53%	59%	73%	55%
<i>Poor</i>	4%	2%	8%	7%	4%

Of those with poor health, those worst affected were in the Church group (6%), in Adult Community Education (7%), and in Senior Citizens (9%). Of those with excellent health, Senior Citizens had the lowest percentage (13%) and the Single Interest group had the highest (65%). The remaining groups were around the average (40-48%).

Thus, when the groups are compared, Senior Citizens are particularly disadvantaged having the highest percentage (9%) of participants in poor health and the lowest percentage in excellent health (13%).

**Social contact**

Many older people who find themselves alone, or in a situation where they feel the need for the company of others, turn to community organizations as a means of re-establishing social contacts and making new friends. Some find that, for whatever the reason may be, they are unable to participate as fully as they may wish and there are times when they continue to feel lonely.

One quarter of the individual respondents indicated that they lived alone and one quarter lived with family. Half of them lived with a partner. A comparison of the extent to which respondents felt lonely and how they lived showed that 64% of those who live alone feel lonely often or sometime, compared with 32% of those who live with family and 17% of those who live with a partner.

Of all respondents, 4% indicated that they often feel lonely and 28% indicated that they feel lonely sometimes. Thus it seems that 32% might benefit from more participation.

When the data is examined according to organization group, the percentages that fell lonely often or sometimes are as follows.

Senior Citizens	46%	Service/Support	27%
Church	37%	Single Interest	27%
Adult Community Education	35%	Probus	24%

These percentages seem to indicate that some organizations are more effective than others in providing opportunities for social contact. On the other hand, perhaps those more in need of social contact seek it in some organizations rather than others.

**The absence of anyone to go with** appears to mainly affect those who live alone – one quarter of the respondents - but can also affect those who have lost a partner and are living with family.

**People from non-English speaking background**

Lack of opportunity to participate appears also to be related to the high percentage of people from non-English speaking background in the City of Manningham. Of all respondents, 21% were born in non-English speaking countries. While keeping in mind that many people from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB) are fluent in English, some interesting findings are apparent.

Table 18 shows the percentages of older people of non-English speaking background in the sample compared with the percentages of all people in the city.

***Table 18: Percentage of people with non-English speaking background***

	<i>% NESB in sample</i>	<i>% NESB in city</i>
<i>women</i>	<i>15%</i>	<i>43.7%</i>
<i>men</i>	<i>31%</i>	<i>56.3%</i>
<i>overall</i>	<i>21%</i>	<i>29.9%</i>

This table appears to indicate that only about one third of the women and half of the men of NESB background in the municipality are participating in community organizations. Factors that contribute may be a reluctance to participate, lack of confidence, and lack of opportunity due to inability to communicate well in English. The proportionally lower level of participation by women is perhaps due to cultural factors.

An examination of the data for the six groups of organizations shows that the Senior Citizens had by far the greatest percentage (77%) of NESB respondents. Only 35% of these NESB respondents were women, a surprisingly low percentage compared with the percentages of women shown in Table 14.

The Adult and Community Education group had 18% of NESB of which 88% were women. This high percentage of women may indicate that those with an interest in learning have less difficulty in participating in activities.

All other groups had very low percentages (5-8%) of NESB respondents.

While the data on country of birth are useful for considering some aspects of participation in community activities, competence in the use of the English language is perhaps a better indicator of ability to participate.

**The data from individuals** show that 92% of the respondents spoke English well. This contrasts with the fact that 79% of the respondents were born in countries that are English speaking. While one might expect some increase on the 79% it seems likely that the high figure is at least partly the result of the need to be able to read English in order to complete the questionnaire.

Some of the respondents (8%) indicated that they had difficulty in speaking English or could not speak English at all. On a group basis, no respondent in the Probus, Service/Support or Single Interest groups indicated that they had any difficulty with English. There was a small number in each of Church (3%) and Adult Community Education (7%) groups. In Senior Citizens, 39% indicated that they spoke English with difficulty or not at all. These people are apparently in the non-English background clubs which comprised 77% of the Senior Citizens respondents. Therefore approximately half of those in the non-English background clubs have difficulty in speaking English.

Here appears to be a strong correspondence between membership of the non-English background clubs and the language spoken at home, as shown in Table 19. These figures should be accepted with caution as they may not be an accurate representation of the actual percentages in each language group due to the limited numbers in the sample.

**Table 19: Language spoken at home and membership of Senior Citizens clubs**

<i>Language spoken at home</i>	<i>% respondents that have difficulty speaking English</i>	<i>Members of Senior Citizens Club</i>
Arabic	33%	Australian Coptic Club
Cantonese	44%	Chinese Club
Greek	45%	Greek Club
Italian	74%	Italian Club
Macedonian	70%	Macedonian Club

## **OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION**

The individual organizations concerned are in the best position to consider the above findings and determine

- (1) whether or not they want to offer more opportunities for older people to participate, and
- (2) if so, in what ways they might do this.

The following information may be of assistance in making such decisions.

**Cost to participants** is an important factor as many older people – close to half of the population of the City of Manningham – are on age pensions and may not be able to afford to participate in some organizations and in certain activities.

Membership fees do not appear to present a substantial problem to participants in the three main providing groups (Senior Citizens, Probus and Adult Community

Education) as they range from an average of \$8.50 a year in Senior Citizens, to \$22 a year in Probus. Most of the Adult Community Education organizations do not have membership fees.

The problem appears to be in the charges for activities like trips in Senior Citizens and Probus and learning activities in Adult Community Education organizations.

**Organizations that need to pay their activity leaders** are clearly at a disadvantage when attempting to reduce costs of participation compared with organizations that have unpaid workers as activity leaders. Probus and Senior Citizens use voluntary workers as activity leaders but in five of the six Adult Community Education organizations the activity leaders are paid. In U3A activity leaders are volunteers.

**Rental of accommodation** imposes significant costs on organizations. Organizations that own their accommodation have an advantage over those who have to rent as the former have no rental outgoings and possibly some rental incomings.

Organizations offering few activities may be able to manage reasonably well with one or two rooms for activities but those offering many activities may require the use of four or more rooms simultaneously as well as office and meeting spaces.

The number of organizations in each organization group and the way in which they obtain accommodation are shown in Table 20.

*Table 20: Sources of accommodation used by organizations*

	<i>Aducom</i>	<i>Church</i>	<i>Probus</i>	<i>Sencit</i>	<i>Sersup</i>	<i>Sinint</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Owned</i>	3	8	0	1	2	4	18
<i>Provided free by Council</i>	1	0	0	8	1	1	11
<i>Leased from Council</i>	4	0	5	0	1	2	12
<i>Leased from others</i>	3	1	4	3	3	4	18

**Organizations which have secure and reliable sources of income** have an advantage over those who need to rely on government grants and their own fund-raising campaigns.

The numbers of organizations in each organization group that obtain funds in the various ways are shown in Table 21. Some organizations did not answer this question.

*Table21: Sources of income of organizations*

	<i>Aducom</i>	<i>Church</i>	<i>Probus</i>	<i>Sencit</i>	<i>Sersup</i>	<i>Sinint</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Subscriptions</i>	2	0	6	10	7	7	32
<i>Activity fees</i>	6	0	5	5	4	5	25
<i>Government grants</i>	4	0	0	6	0	1	11
<i>Council grants</i>	5	0	0	5	1	1	12
<i>Fund raising</i>	4	6	0	5	6	5	26
<i>Donations</i>	1	6	0	4	4	3	18

**Another factor to be considered is future demand.** Some organizations are declining in membership or enrolments, others are static and others are facing an increasing demand. To some extent this may be a function of the effectiveness of management of the organization. In other cases, it may be more a matter of supply and demand. In cases where membership is static, the organizations concerned may have placed a ceiling on membership numbers in order to keep to a manageable size.

Numbers of organizations in each group that are experiencing an increasing, static or declining demand for membership or activities are shown in Table 22. (Some organizations did not answer this question.)

**Table 22: Level of demand experienced by organizations**

	<i>Aducom</i>	<i>Church</i>	<i>Probus</i>	<i>Sencit</i>	<i>Sersup</i>	<i>Sinint</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Demand increasing</i>	4	2	6	3	2	3	20
<i>Demand static</i>	0	4	2	5	2	5	18
<i>Demand declining</i>	0	2	0	1	5	1	9

Overall, 81% of the organizations were experiencing either static or increasing demand.

The organizations indicated **difficulties they would need to overcome** in order to make better provision of opportunities for older people to participate.

The difficulties listed on the questionnaire were

- Finding people interested in participating
- Finding enough volunteers to help run activities
- Finding enough volunteers to help run the organization
- Finding suitable accommodation or venues
- Obtaining sufficient funds to cover expenses
- Assisting with transport of participants

The numbers of organizations experiencing each kind of difficulty are shown in Table 23.

**Table 23: Difficulties experienced by organizations**

	<i>Aducom</i>	<i>Church</i>	<i>Probus</i>	<i>Sencit</i>	<i>Sersup</i>	<i>Sinint</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Finding people</i>	2	3	1	5	5	6	22
<i>Help to run activities</i>	2	3	0	6	1	1	13
<i>Help to run organization</i>	2	1	2	6	3	2	16
<i>Suitable accommodation</i>	2	0	2	2	0	2	8
<i>Funds to cover expenses</i>	4	1	0	4	1	4	14
<i>Providing transport</i>	2	3	1	5	0	1	12

Half of the instances of difficulties encountered are concerned with obtaining people to participate in activities or to assist in running the organization or the activities.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

1. About 3200 older people were members of organizations.
2. Most (88%) of the older members of organizations were in Senior Citizens, Probus and Adult Community Education.
3. Most (84%) of the members of Senior Citizens were in organizations providing activities for people from non-English speaking backgrounds.
4. Most of the older members in Adult Community Education were in U3A. (Most Adult Community Education organizations do not have members but enroll people in activities.)
5. On average, each respondent was a member of 1.9 organizations.
6. Most (86%) of the responding organizations had older people working with them as unpaid workers in management, as activity leaders and in other ways.
7. About half (47%) of the respondents were doing unpaid work.
8. About 3300 older people took part in activities conducted by organizations in the City of Manningham.
9. Only 71% of the individual respondents actually participated in activities run by any organization in the City of Manningham.
10. On average, each respondent that participated did so in 2.3 kinds of activity.
11. Many (40%) respondents mentioned barriers that made it difficult or impossible to participate in activities.
12. The barriers mentioned included lack of time, cost, poor health, not knowing where activities are held, and not having anyone to go with.
13. Most (81%) of the organizations reported that the demand for participation from older people was either static or increasing.
14. Factors that made it difficult for organizations to provide more activities for older people included finding enough older people to participate or to help run the organization and the activities, finding suitable accommodation, funding the costs involved and providing transport to participants.

## **DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS**

### **What are the others doing?**

With the above information in mind and in the wider context of increasing numbers of older people and the benefits of keeping bodies and minds active it is interesting to look at the finding that only about 3300 people over 50 (which includes about 3000 over 60) are actually taking part in activities run by organizations in the City of Manningham. The question “What are the others doing?” immediately comes to mind.

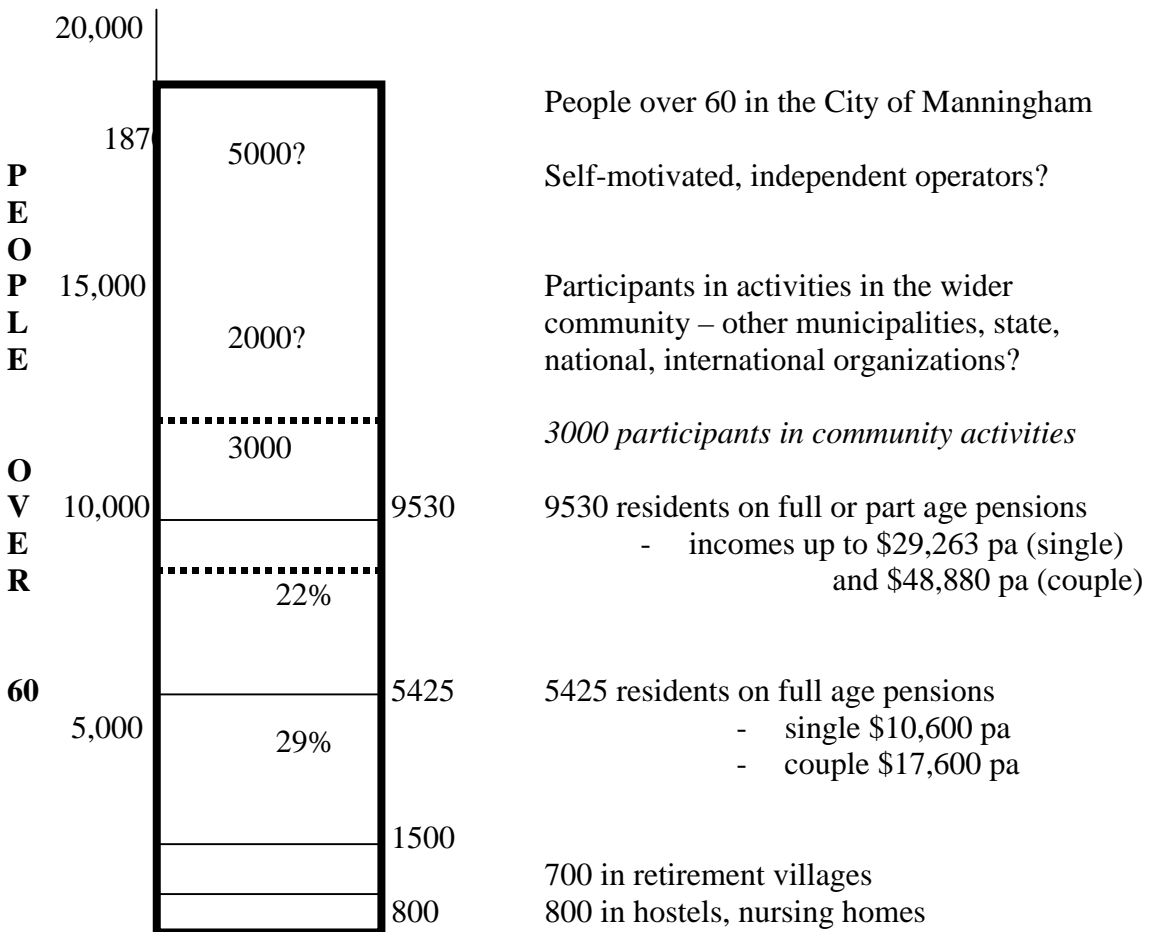
Many organizations have indicated that one of their main difficulties in providing activities for older people is finding enough people interested in participating. Why is that so? In Manningham there appears to be another 16,000 older people who are not involved.

There is little doubt that older people can be very selective when choosing what they want to do during their years of retirement. They can also be very particular about the conditions under which they are prepared to participate. These factors can impact on organizations in many ways, the general effect being that older people will only participate in what they like doing and under acceptable conditions to take part.

But other factors may predominate. Many individuals have mentioned barriers to participation. If it were possible to overcome at least some of these barriers, more people would be able and might be willing to join in.

The barrier which seems to be affecting most people is that they cannot afford to participate. Half of the people over 60 in the city are on an age pension. Most of those would have little discretionary income to spare once they have paid for their essential goods and services.

The following diagram is an attempt to summarize what is known about older residents in the city. Some of the information presented is factual. Some is based on estimates derived from the findings of this study. Some is more in the realm of conjecture.



**OLDER PEOPLE**

**WHAT ARE THEY DOING?**

While it is possible to estimate the approximate number of participants aged 60 and over, the data does not provide information on how many of them are age pensioners. Hence, the position of the block of participants in the diagram can only be a guess.

Nevertheless, it seems that there are around 7000 people over 60 who not accounted for. Who they are and what they are doing can only be guessed at. A reasonable assumption is that a substantial number of them could be very busily engaged in organizations and activities outside the City of Manningham, in other municipalities, in state, national and international organizations. It is also reasonable to assume that there is a substantial number of people over 60 who are self-motivated, independent operators. In general these are active, healthy people who do not need any assistance or prompting about how they should run their lives. They come from all income ranges but all need enough discretionary income to be able to do what they want to do.

If this is a reasonable picture of the older people in the City of Manningham, it is apparent that the extent to which older people are participating in community activities is dependent largely on personal preferences. Such preferences are based on preferred lifestyles and what they want to do during their retirement years. Given good health and some discretionary income, the freedom to choose is very high.

Barriers to participation limit the choices that can be made. In that respect, it seems that the low income earners in particular need special consideration.

A recent publication on older people in NSW<sup>(9)</sup> provides some information on what some of the others might be doing. A 1997 Senior Card survey is reported as finding that seniors are more likely to participate in activities such as gardening, going to movies, theatre, concerts, and visiting art galleries and museums than to join in activities with seniors clubs and centres or play bingo or card games. While this may say something about activities preferred by older people, it may also indicate that seniors clubs and centres in NSW are not offering the kinds of activities that older people want to join in.

The Cultural and Leisure Survey carried out by the Manningham Council<sup>(4)</sup>, cited earlier in this report, also provides a perspective on the interests and activities of older people. The fact that craft and club based activities were mentioned by only 2-3% of those surveyed is of significance.

### **A comparison of the organisations that focus on older people**

Table 24 enables comparisons to be made on the basis of the findings of this investigation. Gaps in the information are due to limitations in the data available.

Care should be taken in interpreting the figures provided for the following reasons.

- There gaps due to the nature of the data collected.
- The sample of participants for U3A was too small to enable valid figures to be calculated.
- The questions were not always interpreted as intended.
- The frequency of provision of activities was not taken into account. Many of the Probus and Senior Citizens activities are carried out monthly. U3A runs over 80 activities each week, with over 1000 participants each week.

Nevertheless, the table does give some insights into the main differences between the organization groups and gives a basis for further investigation into ways in which older people in the City of Manningham might be provided with better opportunities for participation.

**Table 24: A comparison between focus organizations**

	<i>Probus</i>	<i>U3A</i>	<i>Senior Citizens</i>		
			<i>Overall</i>	<i>ESB</i>	<i>NESB</i>
<i>No of organizations in city</i>	16	1	12	3	9
<i>Members*</i>	1500	635	2430	480	1950
<i>Participants*</i>	2100	1040	2600	200	2400
<i>% women</i>	59%	85%**	35%		
<i>% NESB</i>	8%	18%**	77%		
<i>% NESB that are women</i>	67%	88%**	35%		
<i>Organization difficulties</i>	people accomm	accomm funds	people	people transport	people accomm
<i>Level of demand</i>	increasing	increasing	static	static	static
<i>Barriers per person</i>	0.7	2.3**	1.3		
<i>% on low income</i>	10%	26%**	37%		
<i>% with excellent health</i>	44%	42%**	13%		

\* an estimate of total numbers

\*\*adult community education figures

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

### IMPLICATIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONS

Many of the organizations that supplied information for this survey conducted activities as an adjunct to the main purposes of the organizations concerned. While the findings may be of some interest to them, it is assumed that most will not to make changes to make it easier for more older people to participate.

For those organizations that are focussed on the provision of support to older people, namely Senior Citizens, Probus and U3A, the findings have more impact. Much can be done in Manningham to make it easier for older people to use the opportunities available, to join in as members and as participants in organised activities.

The challenge is there for the organizations to do more. More activities and, in some cases, more appropriate activities can be provided. Access can be improved to enable more people to join in. It may be possible to overcome some of the barriers to participation. Cooperative ventures between organizations may be possible.

In some cases, such changes should be possible within existing frameworks of operation. In other cases, support from elsewhere may need to be sought.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR MANNINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

The challenge for Council is how to assist organizations to make better provision of activities for older people.

The organizations have stated the difficulties they have to overcome in order to offer more. The participants have stated the barriers that deter or prevent them from participating.

The need to provide support to those continuing to live at home instead of moving into residential care is obvious. Many others who are mentally and physically active could benefit from more participation through improvements to their health, well being and lifestyle. The whole community will benefit if ways can be found to support the organizations concerned.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Many older people are members of at least two organizations. Commonly, the organizations concerned include Probus, Senior Citizens and U3A. With this in mind, **it is recommended that Council form a working group to examine the findings of this investigation and to recommend action that might be taken to increase opportunities for older people to participate in community activities in the City of Manningham.**

It is suggested that the working group be small and should comprise two representatives from each of the three main groups – Probus, Senior Citizens and U3A – plus such Council officers and other people with expertise in the area.

### **REFERENCES**

1. Information supplied by Manningham City Council officers.
2. Report of the Inquiry into Planning for Positive Ageing, Family and Community Development Committee, parliament of Victoria, December 1997.
3. Manningham City Council: Corporate Plan 2000-2003.
4. Manningham City Council: Open Space Strategy 1999.
5. Social Support and Interests of Older Adults in Manningham, Aged and Disability Support Services, Manningham City Council, February 2001.
6. Information supplied by Manningham Economic and Environmental Planning.
7. [Knowledge.Desk@centrelink.gov.au](mailto:Knowledge.Desk@centrelink.gov.au)
8. Access for Adults: Summary report based on 1999 data; Adult, Community and Further Education Board.
9. Older People in NSW, a Snapshot; NSW Ageing and Disability Department, 1999.
10. Older People, NSW, 2000; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2000.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Many organizations in the City of Manningham provide opportunities for older people (50 and over) to participate as volunteers to assist in running the organization. The following questions are for those organizations. The information collected will be shared with all organizations that assist by returning completed questionnaires as requested.

Name of organization .....

Address .....

.....

Contact person ..... Phone .....

Position in organization .....

Main purpose of the organization

.....
.....
.....

If you use voluntary helpers over 50 years of age please supply the following information

Table with 3 columns: Type of activity, Approximately how many participate women, and men. Rows include Assisting with management, As activity leaders, and In other ways.

Participation of older people (50 and over) in organized activities

How many of your current members are 50 years of age or older? ..... (an approximate number is adequate)



**Source of income to carry out the activities**

*approx % of  
total cost*

Membership subscriptions	[ ]	.....
Activity fees and charges	[ ]	.....
Government grants	[ ]	.....
Council grants	[ ]	.....
Fund raising ventures	[ ]	.....
Donations	[ ]	.....

**Estimation of future demand**

The number of older persons wanting to participate in activities is

increasing [ ]      not changing [ ]      decreasing [ ]

**What are the main difficulties to be overcome in order for your organization to be able to give older people more opportunities to participate?**

- Finding people interested in participating [ ]
- Finding enough volunteers to help run activities [ ]
- Finding enough volunteers to run the organization [ ]
- Finding suitable accommodation or venues [ ]
- Obtaining sufficient funds to cover expenses [ ]
- Assisting with transport of participants [ ]

Other .....  
.....  
.....

*Add any further comments that you may wish to make*

.....  
.....  
.....

Information provided by ..... Date .....

<b>Please return the completed questionnaire in the stamped, addressed envelope provided</b>
<b>to</b> Community Activities Project PO Box 1127 DONCASTER EAST Vic 3109

## APPENDIX 2

Questionnaire for individuals

Community Activities Project

### PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

The following questions are designed for individual older people – 50 years of age and over – to determine the extent of their participation in community activities. **If you are in that age group, your assistance in answering the questions would be much appreciated.** You will have the opportunity to state the kinds of activities of interest to you and also barriers to your participation.

**DO NOT GIVE YOUR NAME OR ADDRESS.** We do not want to know who provided the answers.

We would prefer that you answered all the questions to make the information complete.

*Please answer in the spaces provided. You may attach additional comments or statements if you wish.*

#### Personal information

1. My age group is 50 to 59 [ ] 60 to 69 [ ] 70 to 79 [ ] 80 or over [ ]
2. I am female [ ] male [ ]
3. I was born in (state country of birth) .....
4. The language I usually speak is .....
5. I speak English  
not at all [ ] with difficulty [ ] well [ ]
6. I now live by myself [ ] with family [ ] with a partner [ ]
7. I live in my own house [ ] in a rented house [ ]  
in a retirement village [ ] in a hostel [ ]
8. My health is poor [ ] reasonable to good [ ] excellent [ ]
9. My income is such that  
I have little to spare after meeting basic costs [ ]  
I can afford to do many things but not travel a lot [ ]  
money does not restrict my activities [ ]
10. I am fully retired [ ] working part time [ ] working full time [ ]
11. I feel lonely often [ ] sometimes [ ]  
rarely [ ] never [ ]

12. Finding time to participate in activities run by community organizations would be impossible [ ] reasonably easy [ ] no problem [ ]

**Participation in community organizations**

13. I am a member of the following community organizations  
(please name the organization)

- church [ ] .....
- service club [ ] .....
- sporting club [ ] .....
- senior citizens club [ ] .....
- art or craft group [ ] .....
- music or theatre group [ ] .....
- other .....
- .....

14. I do work for the following community organizations.  
(include all work done, paid or unpaid, no matter how minor)

What you do	Approx hours per week
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....

15. I participate in the following activities run by community organizations

- Sport, fitness or outdoor activities [ ]
- Personal development activities [ ]
- Learning to use a computer [ ]
- Learning to use an ATM,  
paying accounts by phone [ ]
- Art, craft, theatre or film activities [ ]
- Language studies [ ]
- Music, dance or choir [ ]

Hobby or recreational [ ]  
Trips or travel [ ]

Other .....

16. I would like to be able to participate in activities like the following but have been unable to do so.

.....  
.....

17. The main reasons why I have been unable to participate in activities are:

They cost too much [ ]  
I have no one to go with [ ]  
I do not know where the activities are held [ ]  
I am often not well enough to participate [ ]  
I have no way of getting there [ ]  
No one provides the activity [ ]  
I don't have enough free time [ ]

Other .....

18. Other comments

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

*Please return the completed questionnaire on the stamped, addressed envelope provided to **Community Activities Project, PO Box 1127, DONCASTER EAST Vic 3109.***

## APPENDIX 3

# ORGANIZATION GROUPS

### **Adult community education** (6 organizations, 44 individual responses)

Bulleen Templestowe Community House  
Donvale Living and Learning Centre  
Manningham U3A  
Park Orchards Community House  
TRY Activities Centre  
Wonga Park Community House

### **Church** (9 organizations, 63 individual responses)

Bullen Baptist Coffee Morning Fellowship  
Doncaster Community Church of Christ  
Doncaster (Pilgrim) Uniting Church  
Emmanuel Anglican Church Park Orchards  
Holy Trinity Anglican Church  
St Peter and Paul Drop-in Centre  
St Phillips Deep Creek Anglican Church  
Warrandyte Uniting Church  
Wesley Uniting Church East Doncaster

### **Probus** (10 organizations, 79 individual responses)

Combined Probus Club of Bulleen/Templestowe  
Combined Probus Club Doncaster  
Combined Probus Club of Doncaster East  
Donview Heights Probus Club  
Doncaster Ladies Probus Club  
Ladies Probus Club of Doncaster Central  
Mens Probus Club at Doncaster Central  
Probus Club of Warrandyte and Park Orchards  
Templestowe Central Probus  
The Probus Club of Donvale

### **Senior Citizens** (10 organizations, 78 individual responses)

Australian Coptic Senior Citizens Club  
Bulleen Templestowe Senior Citizens Centre  
Doncaster Senior Citizens Centre  
Ente Vincentivi Nel Mondo  
Greek Elderly Citizens Club  
Italian Senior Citizens Club  
Macedonian Senior Citizens Club  
Polish Senior Citizens Club of Doncaster  
St Haralambos Greek Elderly Group  
The Chinese Senior Citizens Club of Manningham

**Service and support** (9 organizations, 73 individual responses)

Doncaster RSL  
Doncaster VIEW Club  
Donvale CWA  
Information Warrandyte  
Lions Club of Templestowe  
Rotary Club of Donvale  
Rotary Club Manningham  
Templestowe CWA  
Templestowe RSL Club

**Single interest** (11 organizations, 63 individual responses)

Doncaster Camera Club  
Doncaster Templestowe Artists Society  
Doncaster Templestowe Handspinners and Weavers  
Doncaster Templestowe Historical Society  
Koonung Bushwalking Club  
Manningham Arts Centre  
St Tim's Walking Group  
The Bhava Centre of Yoga  
Warrandyte Mechanics Institute and Arts Association  
Warrandyte Model Railway Club  
Women's Information Centre

**Not included in the six above groups** (2 organizations, 16 individual responses)

Templestowe Orchard Retirement Village  
Yarra Valley Country Club

**Organizations which replied that they did not have enough older people to warrant a return or the survey was not relevant to them**

St Gregory Catholic Church  
Reform Church of Wonga Park  
Warrandyte Community House  
Ente Friulano Assistenza Sociale Cultruale Emigra  
Red Cross Templestowe Unit  
Kafoozalum & Trilogy Jazz Music Groups  
Trinity Lutheran Church

**Number that sent returns: 57      Others that replied: 7      Total: 64 responses**