**Webinar transcript**

# Prevention of violence against women and safer pathways to services for migrant and refugee communities

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## Presenters:

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**MARIA KOLETH:**
Hello, everyone, and welcome to this ANROWS webinar on the prevention of violence against women and safer pathways to services for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities. My name is Maria Koleth, and I'm the project leader at ANROWS for our Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Projects with Action Research (CALD PAR) initiative. Before we begin this webinar, today, I'd like to acknowledge that I'm calling through to you from the lands of the Dharug people. I'd also like to acknowledge the Elders past, present and emerging from all the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lands you're joining us from today. And to recognise that their sovereignty was never ceded.

I'd also like to recognise at this time, the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic is having on communities across the country. We know that it's having an impact on people's access to family violence services, and we also know that it's disproportionately impacting those on temporary visas and those with a precarious visa status. Our thoughts are very much with those affected. It’s particularly at a time like this, that we really value this opportunity to come together with you and share some of the work that we've been doing.

So let me tell you a little bit about the initiative. So the ANROWS PAR initiative is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services. It involves 26 projects across the country working on family violence, with CALD communities, 18 of those projects focused on prevention. And 8 of those projects focused on creating safer pathways to crisis and support services, ANROWS was contracted to support these projects to take an action research approach to evaluating their activities.

From all the projects action research, as well as our own support notes and evaluation survey, we've published an insights for practice report. This report contains 10 key insights for practitioners and policymakers. Although we've dealt with limited data, and it's not representative of all the work in this area, it does present some important directions for intersectional, collaborative and critically reflective work with CALD communities. In today's webinar, we'll be focusing on three main areas of insights. These are: strengths based community engagement, working with CALD men as allies in prevention, and capacity building in cultural safety.

I'll be joined today by three wonderful project leaders from the CALD PAR initiative, and we also have videos from three project teams during the webinar. So let me introduce you to our panel of three project leaders from the CALD PAR initiative. Firstly, we have Seblework Tadesse, the Director of South's Community Hub in Queensland. Seble, Can you tell us a little bit about the work that your project has been doing in prevention in the CALD PAR initiative?

**SEBLEWORK TADESSE:**
Thank you, Maria. Our project was being funded by the Department of Social Services to prevent family violence for six African community groups. But we managed to deliver our project beyond those focus groups. And with the help of Community Leaders Gathering and Multicultural Australia, we managed to deliver projects to Middle East and Southeast Asian community groups and including other African community groups. Through our project we we have been raising community awareness using community conversation guide, we asked communities to use, and our other focus was to facilitate a peer support group for men using their interests and hobbies and after we are just also using their interest to develop community and service educational resources by partnering with other agencies. We also deliver forums annually with partner organizations to a community group after we collect our community conversation, through our community conversation we collect data and issues and also understanding of communities' attitudes to what is domestic and family violence and we used that community conversation resource to address further findings and gaps in the community and the service.

**MARIA:**
Thank you so much Seble, and we'll be hearing more about your work around the men's shed and the “Men managing change” programme as well during the webinar. We're now going to move to Kathryn Aedy, the prevention of violence against women team leader at Multicultural Centre for Women's Health in Victoria. Kathryn. Hi, can you tell us a little bit about the work you've been doing?

**KATHRYN AEDY:**
Hi, Maria. So Making the Links, it's part of the safer pathway stream of the CALD PAR initiative. And it's a collaborative project, working with migrant women living in regional Victoria, to link them to mainstream family and other relevant services in regional areas. And those areas are Ballarat, Bendigo, Mildura, Swan Hill and Geelong. And we achieve this by building capacity on both sides. So that means delivering education sessions in English and in language to encourage migrant women and men to reflect on their wellbeing in relation to gender equality, and also to discuss and reflect on gender and race discrimination and family violence and to provide support and information on where to seek help locally. At the same time, we support a range of services from response to the prevention of violence to understand and address barriers that are experienced by immigrant women in regional areas. So I'll get into more later. But for example, this could include visa uncertainty, which Maria already talked about, a fear of being stigmatised by people in the community and also by mainstream services about people's cultural backgrounds. And all of this is obviously compounded by remoteness and social isolation in regional areas.

**MARIA:**
Thank you, Kathryn. And now we'll go to Dipti Zachariah, the Multicultural Health Team Leader at Western Sydney Local Health District, Dipti, can you tell us a little bit about your project?

**DIPTI:**
Thanks, Maria. Our project is titled “Rich cultures should have rich relationships” And it was a partnership model between Multicultural Health services at the Local Health District and the Punjabi community’s Harmon foundation and the Sudanese community’s Nuba Mountains group and the Spiritual Revaluation group. So the major aim of the project was for the communities to develop a conceptual understanding and recognition of domestic violence within the context of cultural, gender, generational differences and social changes; build the community's capacity in planning development of appropriate community driven DV awareness and prevention initiatives and develop culturally appropriate resources in partnership with the communities at a grassroots level. And the project started early in February 2018. And we're still going through it. And it's enabled us to actually not only develop conceptual understanding of the communities, but help them design and own the interventions to make it much more sustainable once this project closes. Thanks, Maria.

**MARIA:**
Thank you, Dipti. And we'll be hearing more from all of our presenters throughout the webinar today. So now we'll move to our first set of insights for the webinar. Some of our most important findings in this initiative were around strengths based community engagement. The insights for practice that we've drawn out in this area in our report are to invest time in building culturally safe and trusting relationships with diverse groups and leaders in communities, and also to support core communities through strengths based and aspirational language around gender equality and violence prevention. Now we'll see a little bit about how this works in practice. We have a video contribution from the team at Relationships Australia South Australia on their Good Life project. A reminder to submit your questions as the video plays.

*(VIDEO PLAYING)*

**ENAAM OUDIH**:
Our DV program started two years ago, funded by the Commonwealth after receiving funding from the government, we immediately established a selection panel, which had representation from the community as well as management here, Relationships Australia, and two part time workers were employed, a total of only three days. But we had to capitalise on the knowledge of other African workers within Relationships Australia and outside Relationships Australia, and with their help we established an advisory committee with 80%, minimum 80%, of its members were of African background, and we're, between all the networks, the workers and Advisory Committee, we built lots and lots of networks and connections with different communities, African communities who helped us access the community and started facilitating conversation at management level as well as at the community and different networks that that included churches, mosques, wherever we could get in we basically went in.

**SUMBO NDI:**
If we were to have gone into the community and talk about, oh, we have a session on family and domestic violence, the level of engagement would have received would have been different because we know this from experience in working with other taboo topics that putting a negative spin or naming it directly when people are not ready becomes a barrier, or the strategy with this project is to look from a point of view of what people really connect with and in terms of engaging are consulting with the community to come up with their understanding of the issue and how they wish to engage with it. And they came up with the name, good life, good life in the sense that everyone recognised that for them to leave their countries to come to Australia. They had an intention of coming to have a good life.

But then the issue becomes when they come in Australia, so many things come up, maybe unemployment, lack of understanding of the system, issues with relationships, there are so many other things that come in the way and then conflict arises and if people don't know how to manage these things, or how to seek for help, it then sort of escalates into family and domestic violence. ISSAC ZANGRE: When we went to a community, we know, like the community, A or B, this is the issue. This is the understanding. And this is a barrier.

**BIEN-AIME MURHIMANYA:**
I didn't know much about domestic violence, especially from the African young people's point of view. This project provided me that opportunity to engage with young people like myself, I feel really confident I can talk about the domestic violence in a way that does not really stigmatise it.

**UKASH AHMED:**
I mean, this programme is much needed. I mean, there's an element of taboo that's attached to it. It has opened up a new platform where people can come and start to have conversations. This is really important, but we have discussions and then we've seen some breakthroughs because once you start to articulate your feelings really better, and I mean your problem solving skills just automatically improves. But my biggest fear is initiatives like this that are unique and quite empowering. If there's no kind of an element of sustainability, like it goes on, becomes intergenerational, we kind of lose the whole kind of long term impact aspect of it.

**AZA ISMAIL:**
As a woman, and now that I have daughters, I have nieces, I have sisters, I have friends, and having this conversations not only destigmatises DV as a topic, and it also makes it easier for us to talk about it as women when we come together. And also when I see myself have conversations, I've personally gone through, or seen, or experienced domestic violence in the flesh so I understand that when it's not talked about or it is a taboo topic, I understand how that can be damaging to families and the youth as well.

**SIDIQUE BAH:**
 One good thing about the programme actually was the fact that we sort of we are not told, we are not told what to do, or how to say things. We are given the opportunity to express ourselves or what we think about domestic violence, and this is something that sometimes gets missed in the whole picture because sometimes men from African background we feel like people have this feeling that we are the perpetrators all the time and so there is this negative connotation to it. When you say domestic violence, would you want to talk about it?

**ENAAM OUDIH:**
The project has achieved so much, and I wish I have more time to go through them all. In a very nutshell, I could say that the all the promotional materials that we've developed are still being used. The poster is being used actually as a tool to help the conversation, for whether we're working with the individual or family, or a community. We've held so many conversation sessions with the community, and we've learned so much. And we've developed, basically, a lot of information and understanding about the cultural context. We've run cross-culture training also to help service providers understand the context of DV, the context of DV within the African community. We have built a huge network. We have, confidently, we could say more than 2,000 people benefited from the program with so little funding. There is a huge movement from the youth community, African, to keep the conversation happening, and we've developed also videos to help the community also continue the conversation.

*(VIDEO ENDS)*

**MARIA:**
So, thank you, RASA, for that video example of taking a whole of community approach to prevention using aspirational language around achieving the good life for families, and gradually allowing family violence to be discussed in the context of settlement. Dipti, I know that your project took a related approach with two different communities. How long did it take you to build trust with the community?

**DIPTI:**
So, initially, when we started, I mean both communities were happy to come on board, but it took not...it took us almost, I would say six to eight months to slowly start building trust and allowing communities to actually get us into their space. So, that was the initial trust-building, and it easily took us a year for them to, I would say completely trust us and disclose or even come on board as a partner where they felt respected and valued in the engagement.

**MARIA:**
Right, and how important was responding to their different settlement journeys when building that trust?

**DIPTI:**
As I mentioned, when I started, we had two different communities, the Punjabi community on one end of the spectrum, and on the other side, you have the South Sudanese community with a refugee background. They were at different levels of engagement with different challenges, and as practitioners and people at the project team, it was important for us not to stereotype and label, but appreciate that the challenges are different. And where they are at that moment is important. So, we have to understand whether it was, you know, there was post-traumatic stress involved, whether there are the cultural issues that one community had more than the other, whether their styles of parenting was different, the patriarchal lenses to which they which they saw life was different.

And understand that with them alongside, and then approach the issue. So, they were, they had different challenges. For example, with the Panjabi community, right from the beginning, they spoke a lot about challenges on gender equality. And for the Sudanese community, it manifested through inter-generational conflict. So, this started from the beginning, and we had to approach it using what they saw as the issue, and then slowly bring in other challenges that might come too. And with a lot of these communities, for example the Panjabi community, you had settlement issues because you had women who came on dependent visas. They came with their partners and husbands. With the Sudanese community, the settlement, even though you had defined settlement time, say for five years. In five years, the refugee community should be settled and functioning, and ready to conquer the world. Many of them fell through the gap. So, we had to address those issues and connect them to services that would support them to ensure they're fine and in a safe place to go ahead with the focus on domestic violence and family violence prevention.

**MARIA:**
How is this approach that you took different to community consultation as it's usually done in mainstream organisations?

**DIPTI:**
In many times, I think in, from a mainstream perspective, there is a tendency you have a fixed program, you have a fixed design that has worked with majority of the communities. So, there's an assumption made that one size fits all. And maybe service providers, however good their intentions are, they might not have enough time to actually unpack it with the community and address issues that might arise as we go along. So, I think with the project in consultation with, you know, with the ANROWS team, we consciously made an effort to invest in that trust-building relationship and not ignore issues and challenges that kept coming out because you could brush it away and say, This is not focusing on domestic violence prevention. They're focusing on designing of interventions, and ignore the rest. We couldn't separate the two. So, I think time is a factor and understanding that tailoring, and customising and allowing communities to own the intervention is important. If it has be successful, and it has to work.

**MARIA:**
Thanks, Dipti. And now, we do have a question from the audience on this area. The question is, how are you getting the message across about domestic violence, especially in this pandemic period where COVID-19 has forced people to stay at home? Now, Dipti, I know that your project was quite innovative in this area. Did you want to add any comments about this question?

**DIPTI:**
Yeah, just going back to one piece of the project, how...like other projects too, we did have, you know, bilingual facilitators or bilingual community workers who are part of the project, who were trained in, you know, building the bridge between us and the community. They were men and women identified by the communities themselves. Now, it's come in good use, especially during the COVID time where they've actually tapped into these local networks that is bilingual community educators and facilitators have. So, it's not...it might not be the fancy Zoom which is the in thing today, but they use simple things like WhatsApp, phone calls to just stay connected to women in the community whom they've established relationships with. So, a lot of information is disseminated. Sometimes, you know, last week I had a bilingual educator who actually spoke to me and said that woman just want to speak on the phone. They just want to talk. They just want to share. And a lot of our refugee communities, like our South Sudanese community, this isolation is creating a lot of other issues such as memories of time they've been in camps or memories of war where they’ve been stuck in one place. And also this created opportunities for these bilingual facilitators to connect them subtly and safely to case workers, to services that can still provide support. At times, we've noticed that...noticed that just a listening ear, and because of this established relationship, it just becomes a natural progression of support and connecting with services that continue to happen. What we've also done is review some of our local grassroot level contacts that we've made through the projects to create resources that is...that are in language and will be useful to the communities.

So, some of them do access mainstream, fantastic resources that teams like SBS Radio have created. We've also created our own resources designed by the community in consultation with the community that is designated faster and there's greater acceptance. It's still a challenge, Maria, because many of them are still not able to come out of their homes, but we'll wait and see how things go. But we want the community to know that we are there, we're just a call away, a text away, a door away if need be, to support them.

**MARIA:**
Thanks, Dipti and those comments on the continuing and constant support that you do offer, and the line to other services as well is so important. If we can now go to Kathryn as well.

**KATHRYN:**
Hi, Maria, thanks. As Dipti has said, it is sometimes difficult with technology, but we know from speaking to our partners in prevention and also in some of our own work that people are checking in directly with community members using WhatsApp, text, even email and Zoom. And also we're just emphasising the message on our social media outreach and also in radio shows that our bilingual health educators have been delivering. And you can find information about those radio shows on our website. That's...although we acknowledge additional pressures on families and households additional pressures on families and households at this time are creating extra stress that it's very real during COVID-19 crisis, that violence is never OK and there's no excuse for it. And we're ensuring that people know that mental health and family violence response services are still available even it's by phone. And that some are still open to go in in person. And so, keeping people up-to-date about what is available where.

**MARIA:**
Thank you, Kathryn, and those are some really important channels to keep that information flowing, and people aware of services and help that's out there. To add to what presenters have pointed out, we know that projects have always used social media platforms like WeChat and WhatsApp, and they've been doing things like creating digital stories. So, the fact that they've used these multiple channels has given them an advantage this time to be able to use that a lot more when we're in this pandemic period. And we also know that there are projects in the initiative like the project at Women's Legal Service in South Australia that created a smartphone app with in-language information about services. So, that work is particularly relevant to this time as well.

So, now, we're going to move on to our second segment on engaging CALD men as allies in prevention. Many projects are doing or aiming to do gender transformative work with men in this area, and we'll be looking at the two main insights around this. The first is to promote positive family relationships and gender equality, and non-judgemental spaces for CALD men. And the second is from the outset of grant funding, invest in capacity-building on gender transformative and culturally safe prevention work with men in CALD communities. We'll be now looking at an example video from Save the Children, Western Australia about how they engage men and boys in prevention-focused groups and workshops. Don't forget to submit your questions while the video plays.

*(VIDEO PLAYING)*

**DANIELLE WINZENRIED:**
OK so, Maria has asked us to present on our project for the webinar. So, my name is Danielle.

**MARGARET KABARE:**
And my name is Margaret.

**DANIELLE:**
And we're from the Strength to Strength CALD PAR project through Save the Children which was based in the city of Gosnells in WA.

**MARGARET:**
So, Strength to Strength worked at three levels of the community. At tier one, we've worked with 19 men from African backgrounds.

**DANIELLE:**
In tier two, we've worked with young people aged between 11 and 16, from Afghan, Burundi, and Arabic speaking backgrounds.

**MARGARET:**
Yeah, and at tier 3, we worked with young people. So, we ran school based workshops, primary prevention workshops in two schools, and the two schools had a high population of young people from CALD backgrounds. So, at tier one, we engaged 19 men. So, the 19 men ran the project through our contracted facilitator, and what...well, we had a high level of engagement in our focus group discussions. We engaged them in focus group discussions over 12 weeks. And one of the things that worked really well was the fact that the facilitator was from the same cultural and religious backgrounds as them, as the men.

**DANIELLE:**
So, we started conversations around primary prevention. We did encounter resistance around women's equality and violence against women.

**MARGARET:**
Yeah. So, what we would, moving forward, there's need to keep on focusing on changing attitudes towards gender and equalities amongst men, when working with men.

**DANIELLE:**
Yeah. So, tier two was a weekly after-school program, and again, we experienced high levels of engagement from the young people.

**MARGARET:**
It is within the fast term of implementing the program, we had participation of at least 90%, and throughout the program, over 80% of the participants did participate in the program. And we also made some impacts. Our evaluation data indicates that we... there was some level of changes in beliefs and perceptions, for example, by the end of the program most of the boys had rejected the statements that it is OK to share photos and texts and videos of women or girls online to scare them. And we also worked with the mums.

**DANIELLE:**
Yeah, so the mums reported noticing increased levels of independence and confidence at home with their sons and also offering to help with their household chores.

**MARGARET:**
Yeah, and beyond that, beyond just achieving the outcomes of the project, the boys felt that it was a safe space and provided a safe space for them to engage in conversation around religious ethics, to form friendships and to connect with the Australian life through the facilitators.

**DANIELLE:**
So I will leave you with a few words from one of the young people.

*(MUSIC PLAYING)*

**MURTEZA:**
Before joining the Strength to Strength program, I didn't know anything about masculinity, really. I thought it was like men are rough, they are strong, they can do anything, they can do anything, they can run the family whatever way they want. It's all I knew before I joined strength for strength program. The stereotype is like men never cry but they do. Like they say that men are weak, men are not weak they are strong but according to me, yes they are, they are like, they are not superhuman, yeah. They are like normal person who can cry who can do whatever they want. But this stereotype is like they should not do it.

It was not a program, it was more like a family. We had good sisters who would always advise us and show us the right way. There were nice brothers who show us how to deal with your stress, how to treat others nicely, how to be respectful, and all the other multicultural boys who are in the program. I think it was a golden chance for me to get to spend more time with them, I learnt from them, I learnt the skills, I learnt how to speak, I learnt many things that you can't believe.

*(VIDEO ENDS)*

**MARIA:**
Thank you Save the Children WA and their project participant for that wonderful video – highlighting the importance of targeting different age groups and the importance of bicultural facilitation in ensuring a supportive space for engaging CALD men in prevention. Now Seble, I know that your project has quite a lot of engagement with bicultural facilitation and used that to ensure a supportive space. Can you tell us a little bit more about that?

**SEBLE:**
Thanks Maria. Yes our project is the “Men managing change” program. It's a pilot project for men’s support groups. It's tailored to support men based on their interests and hobbies to create a safe space to connect and for this, having the bicultural workers are vitally useful in this, And especially it's in the focus because we use male facilitators on that, we make sure they are actually are themselves, [that] they have a right attitude and also behavioural change in terms of gender so they were, [have] been very very instrumental, from the recruitment of participants and also through the program being there as agents to facilitate a conversation on that. Also we had not [just] bicultural workers, but we were assisted from a facilitator from the legal space how men felt during our community conversation we ran on a men's group to discuss about what their understanding and family conflict and also family balance [was] and that we identified there is a gap in how they understand domestic and family violence, especially from the legal point of view, and they felt more betrayed in the society, where they come, they [thought they] will have, good for life but they felt differently and because of that the bicultural, worker was facilitating, addressing some of the issues through the help of RAILS, the Refugee Legal Service, who have been, what's their rights but also what's their responsibility in this country, in their new home. And so that in the beginning there was a resistance and and also more, just one-sided and externalised the problem but through a long discussion, it was ten weeks, actively the conversation was eight weeks, but we also after that we also developed other materials in terms of, their changing through time through that conversation from the space which we provide. The bi cultural worker was there as the facilitator, from making, cooking and also going through you know some with their independent interests, they go to the woodwork and also by playing pool and just more feeling that, it's their space so the bicultural worker has been playing a big role on that and make them, the participants feel welcome and safe.

**MARIA:**
Thank you so much for sharing that with us. And I know you touched there on, that there was some resistance in your project, through gender equality messages and that was something that STC WA also referred to in their video. What else did you do to address that resistance? And address you know, the feelings of a loss of identity that they face and I know that you also work with women in your community conversations as well. So tell us a little bit about that.

**SEBLE:**
Yes through, because the resistance was alongside you know, the beginning of the project mapped what is the strengths within the community, what is the threat or the gaps between, the service providers and also the community but also the gap of knowledge, how domestic and family violence was being understood in the community so through that we had a men's group only who had a discussion on that, but also women and both together, husband and wife came together, so through that we were being under a long resistance because they felt very betrayed by the partner or by the service this is not the case for them and they don't have rights so they don't expect much change all this was been kind of pre [the program], the information they have is being framed as it's a woman's country, it's not my country, to betray their identity but what we did is through conversation saying okay we all choose to be here to have a good life and to continue to have our family how can we actually and you know address that because we know in one way or in another way our behavior as individual we have to change so those challenges, we reflected back to the participants to just see through they have also this country the law is for men and women and each individual has to look at their own behaviour and what's their contribution to make their life, better and to make it their family's life safe, so through that there was a trust developed through time especially in the men managing change program, from because some of our activities were being tailored to just cook their own meal after the activity and that meant the bicultural worker and also other participants who have a better view on things they are shaping each other so that once they know that the place is for them to just make things better and also look at themselves and then what's their role in that, it is developing, through time the trust is being you know built, on that but there is a huge resistance. But also giving enough time especially the community conversation space we give enough time for the community. We weren't rushed much when we, rather than ask just on our time, that we choose their time so we go to the church, we go to the mosque and, their place, wherever there is a comfort for community to relax and speak and take action so that helped us to overcome.

**MARIA:**
Thank you Seble for answering that question on resistance. I was also wondering Dipti if you wanted to comment on this and how your project responded to resistance when engaging CALD men in prevention .

**DIPTI:**
Thanks Maria. You know one thing that we learnt during our project and even as we progress is we need to be real when we work with communities and resistance is a part of this reality. And this, we did have instances of resistance especially coming from the men in the community. And it was a humbling experience especially when you think that things are going smooth, you build the trust and you just gonna have smooth sailing and the resistance comes and just like hits you and you almost get back to square one.

And one thing that I personally learnt was I can't try and fix it myself. The resistance that we faced, and it had to be jointly addressed, collaboratively with the community. And one specific instance where we did have resistance and I had to actually step back and allow it to kind of unfold and then go back to the community and jointly decide how to address it. And what we decided to do was ignore it at that particular stage because that was not the right space to kind of address it or fight it or dismiss it. And then we went back to the community and discussed with them and reopened the discussion. It was just magical to see that the community supports you and since you do have champions who agree with you who are on your side, and we address the situation and things went fine. So the particular individual involved had to be spoken to and we decided to disagree, but majority of the stakeholder of the community was OK for us to progress. So we essentially agreed to disagree but opened opportunities to dialogue and to debate and to address the issues that were raised.

**MARIA:**
We are now going to turn to the third segment of the webinar to capacity building and culturally safe practices. And in particular the need for integration and the partnerships between settlement, multicultural and family violence services. So the key insights to action in this area are: introduce cultural safety training and service partnerships to build capacity across settlements services, mainstream family violence services and law enforcement agencies as well as to support bicultural workers through individual safety plans, culturally safe management practices and professional opportunities. We have a video example from the Safer Pathways Project at Ballarat Community Health about these insights. It also includes comments from two members of their project reference group who supported its implementation. If you have a question for the panel on capacity building please submit it now. We also have some time for taking general questions after the video.

*(VIDEO PLAYING)*

**LESLEY McKARNEY:**
Hello, this is Lesley McKarney from Ballarat Community Health I'm leading the safer pathways for and immigrant women in Ballarat and Western Victoria project, which is part of the CALD PAR initiative. Our project has worked on capacity building in the areas of cultural safety and cultural humility with a range of agencies and services including training sessions for health services’ staff, non-governmental, community services and staff from the law enforcement agencies. We completed a detailed training needs and gap analysis to inform the role out of professional development workshops and through this analysis, we identified gaps among service providers in navigating the service system, the family violence service system, in family violence referral networks and inter agency arrangements for refugees and immigrant women at risk who are experiencing family violence as well as in trauma informed care for this kind of work.

We also consulted with women from a range of diverse communities in Ballarat and discovered that there was a universal understanding that family violence meant physical violence, but there was virtually no understanding of other forms of family violence. So there was also a lack of awareness among women and girls that help was available for family violence. We knew we had a lot of work to do to improve awareness of the types of family violence and how and where to seek help with his community. So attending service network meetings and persisting in bringing up the importance of cultural safety and cultural humility training was important for getting organisational buy in for the training to take place.

Ballarat Community Health partnered with the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health in Melbourne, another CALD PAR project organisation to provide culturally safe facilitation of some of our community education events, to increase awareness of family violence and services. MCWH also contributed to workplace cultural competency workshops. We also developed a localised service provider directory for the Local Health District and a family violence referral flowchart, which we then shared with health service providers and other mainstream services, as well as the local Primary Health Network, Western Victoria Primary Health Network in both Central Highlands and Wimmera districts. Some service providers were very receptive to our work and others took a bit longer to take on our key messages. However, the work of capacity building is important for planting the seed of future work to address culturally safe practices among stakeholders in the family violence sector.

**MARIANNE HENDRON:**
I'm Marianne Hendron the CEO of Women's Health Grampians. The Ballarat and Western Victoria Safer Pathways Project has contributed significantly to building capacity amongst agencies in this region, around intersectionality and cultural safety. In particular, it has engaged really well with agencies and key services in the western part of this region, in the more rural and remote areas where migrant and refugee women are particularly isolated and vulnerable. So this has been very much welcomed.

**LIBBY JEWSON:**
It's been fantastic working with the Safer Pathways Project in the central highlands region. I chaired the reference group for this project, and a whole group of different agencies came together, who had never really come together before in this way to work out the best way as a region to be able to respond in to family violence for refugee and immigrant women. So part of the project was that the whole region built capacity to be able to respond to refugee and immigrant women. It wasn't just agency focused. I'm also the WRISC Family Violence Support Agency Executive Officer. And because of that, I was also able to influence the staff at my organisation to be able to respond in a way and to be able to have better access to refugee and immigrant women in relation to family violence. And this included developing some policies and procedures around this, working out how to use interpreter services in a much better and appropriate way. We also had students in this, 2019, who were from refugee and Immigrant background, so that really build our capacity and confidence in this area.

*(VIDEO ENDS)*

**MARIA:**
Thanks to Ballarat Community Health and their advisory group members, highlighting the importance of mobilising through networks and training sessions to build capacity in culturally safe practice across regions. Kathryn, your project in particular, worked with Lesley at Ballarat Community Health, among other partners. Can you tell us a little bit about how your project delivery model works with networks of services in different regional locations?

**KATHRYN:**
Yes, so as we said, we are based in Melbourne. So we aim to build the expertise, sorry build on the expertise of community health, and multicultural organisations in regional areas. And our work is more sustainable when we add value to the work that's already being done there and not trying to duplicate anything that's being done in the area. So as Lesley said in the video, in Ballarat, we partnered with Ballarat Community Health to facilitate Community Education events as part of our safe, both of our Safer Pathways projects. In Bendigo, Swan Hill, and Mildura we conducted a training needs analysis of providers and tailored training to build the capacity of services to work equitably with migrant communities.

And talking about building trust, it was much more effective to travel to the regional areas for meeting, rather than speaking on the phone or sending emails before delivering education sessions or training. And I think it's also important to note that there are prevention contributors or the kind of, I think what's in the CALD PAR report is accidental helper. And so we also looked at in areas where there weren't necessarily specialist services, or the multicultural services were overbooked, or, you know, whatever made it difficult to coordinate in certain areas. We would also look at building the capacity of local councils and mainstream services, and even university and teaching staff working with international students, for example.

**MARIA:**
Fantastic, thanks for bringing that issue of accidental workers to the fore as well. And in the training and capacity building your project carried out what was the difference between focusing on cultural safety, rather than the other frameworks like cultural competence that are out there?

**KATHRYN:**
Yes, so that's at the core of all of the work we do at Multicultural Centre for Women's Health, and Lesley touched on that as well and in her video, but basically cultural safety or humility is about focusing on systems and structures of powers that impact people's lives. So that could include in case of migrant women and men, the migration system, the availability of information in language, access to transportation and other services. And we really like to emphasise that you can't know a person by assuming or making cultural stereotypes or presumption that reduce people to a culture based on whether it's their language or nationality or faith, and that we should always be considering what are the different forces at play that in people's lives and especially in response and fully listening to a person and understanding what it is that makes people feel afraid or feel safe and what you know, for them to make informed choices for themselves.

**MARIA:**
Thanks, Kathryn. And I know that MCWH has been quite innovative with putting into place workplace structures to support its bicultural workers. Can you tell us a little bit about those?

**KATHRYN:**
Yes, so I won't go too much into the challenges that bilingual and bicultural workers face when working in prevention, but I know that the CALD PAR report does do that. But it's really important that organisations support bilingual workers as integral employees of an organisation. So they're not add on to an organisation. They're not called on just as needed responsively, but really, that bicultural and bilingual workers contribute a significant amount to an organisation as a whole and they also need specific support in their roles because of the unique circumstances. For example, some ways that we can support bilingual workers and bicultural workers is to agree on really clear boundaries around what their role entails and what it doesn't entail. So for example, if they're not working in response or counselling, or even as an interpreter, then that's not what should be expected of them by the organisation or by the community that they're working with. And also being able to keep clear boundaries around their working and non-working hours if they are part of the community that they're working with. And also co-creating a risk management strategy. So that could involve having flexible employment policies and making sure that there's debriefing time and planning meetings before and after contracted work or education sessions, for example, and ensuring that workers are equitably paid for their time Including that preparation and debrief time, and also celebrating the work that they do, and showcasing their work on social media and supporting their career advancement and recognition - because a lot of bicultural and bilingual workers might be working for multiple organisations at once due to the casual nature of the role currently. And finally, I just want to say that it's really important that people don't, like I said, or about cultural humility, that people don't conflate a person speaking a certain language meaning that they have similar views to or belief systems of people they are working with in a community, and that perspectives on gender equality and people's experiences are very diverse, within and across cultures.

**MARIA:**
Thank you, Kathryn. We do have some time now for some general questions from the audience. The first is about the trust building process with communities But the audience member wants to know what are the main elements that are necessary for this trust building process to take place?

**DIPTI:**
So I'm just gonna, you know, I've actually got my notes in front of me and I've come up with some kind of formula that we learned during our process around trust building. If you remember the project says “Rich cultures should have rich relationships” and for our project with the community, we started from a place of strength, and the title was coined in consultation with both the communities involved and they suggested it and one of the wins or the steps for trust building is coming from a position of recognising the strengths, literally doing an inventory of the positives that the community already had, because then they value the respect you have.

So a place of strength, so rich cultures when we recognise their strength, we understand they have a richness that we already bring into the equation. And once you recognise it, it's easier you just feel equipped, you feel confident, both for communities and the people working within it. It's it was just beautiful to recognise and honour the courage it takes for each of these people to start off in a new country. And you know, Maria mentioned before settlement issues and challenges. And despite that, they want to engage with us on this project.

And the second one was relationship and respect. Investing in relationships, and it doesn't happen overnight. And it's taken us a couple of months, more than a year you can't rush into it and making it people centred is very important. And people centeredness takes time, takes effort, takes doing boring meetings, takes attending long cultural events that you might not appreciate initially, but it just grows on you and you become part of the fabric and you build relationships that are for life. And it's important that these relationships are built and you constantly overcommunicate the respect. And you do initially, you know, I don't want to say exaggerate the rapport, but maybe to an extent you do that because you want them to know that you care and you're investing in it as an equal partner. So I said rich cultures, relationship and respect.

The third one was being real. Being real with what you can achieve, because you're not doing on your own and being real enough to reassess your goals. And I still remember a lot of conversations with Maria and Liz from ANROWS. We had to go back to the drawing board because the community was not ready or the community had different ideas of constantly going back and having realistic goals and reporting it back to your community because they want to know what's happening, you have a meeting, you've decided with your internal teams, but they need to understand how we're progressing.

And the other one was resistance we already spoke about. It's real projects, you're dealing with people, you're not perfect, and they will be resistant. You can't ignore it, but you figure out a way to address it and the last one was reflecting constantly. And for me that was a learning because you know, you're very action oriented you want, you have milestones to achieve, but reflecting and I should thank Liz and Maria for constantly pushing us to make notes to reflect and to understand, to think out loud because once you reflect and you actually physically put those notes down, you understand what worked, what didn't. And you need to be humble enough to go back to the community and say, I can do this, I can't do this, I'm sorry about this.

So these were a few of the things that helped us in our project in building trust. And it's not linear, it's, you know, you keep going back to appreciating the richness, you keep going back to building rapport, you keep hitting and facing resistance, you keep changing the way you're reporting, you come up with innovative ways of reassessing goals. And more than anything, you're ready to fail and you're ready to fail together when the wins and the losses are shared with the community. It's a different kind of success story and you're still learning and we have come out richer than the communities themselves because how much they open up to you and how much they share and how much you learn- no textbook, no university or webinar is gonna give you that- Thanks, Maria.

**MARIA:**
So Dipti thank you for sharing those elements of the trust building process. Now, how did that trust building process, just for the audience on that question, how did that trust building process actually help you pursue more creative projects with the community?

**DIPTI:**
It is, you know, the, when I initially started, I spoke that our aim was to create culturally appropriate interventions in partnership with the communities and we have to take in input when building trust, it's not just one way, you need input from your equal partner, which is a community. And with the Punjabi community, they wanted to explore art as a medium to get DV prevention messages across. So we've actually collaborated with the community and come up with two thought-provoking plays in Punjabi and Hindi and Hinglish, a mix of Indian English, reflecting and actually capturing the issues that were raised by the communities themselves through focus groups to the most probably the stage end of this year. They were planned actually in June, but the COVID crisis has dampened all those plans. But the actors, the creative director, the staff are doing the recording are all from the community that partnered with us. So they're owning the story and it has evolved beautifully.

So you start with a blank sheet there was a writer's workshop from, which involved community members, and they went through the focus group findings and they were able to talk out. It's good, it's very exciting and it's a creatively disturbing exercise too. And you know, when we discussed the script and we went through it, there were many people around the table crying and it resonated with them with people in this circles and we were hoping that it will be powerful not just for the survivors who've had their stories told but for our communities for bystanders to take action. And it's an art you know, it's nothing new as such it is it has been used as therapy and we hope it's healing and to call for action and seeing it on stage looking at through when an actor brings it to life will be an interesting experience. And other thing we've done is we've used the equality wheel in our introductions. We did couple of education sessions with the communities. We noticed that some of the behaviours the community felt was not culturally responsive.

So we've actually gone back to the community and asked them to share with us culturally responsive behaviours to form part of the equality wheel. And the response has been very good, both men and women. And I want to emphasise men again, Maria, because that was one of the aspects of the project we invested in, is bringing men on board. We didn't want to isolate them, we want them to be a part of it. And they've done a fantastic job actually contributing to what works. So hopefully, when that takes shape, there's something that the community can use, what is it to be respectful and when you break it down into behaviours in their own with their own cultural hues and their own context, it makes it easier to action it, you know, whether it's a man or woman, a young person. So these would be the creative things that we've used. We've also gonna have some songwriters put in songs as part of our play. And we'll exploring options to do it as a street play in areas where we have large presence of this community. So that's, let's see how it goes. And we're happy with the progress.

**MARIA:**
Fantastic, thank you Dipti for sharing that. Now, Seble, did you have anything to add on this question of trust building with community?

**SEBLE:**
Yes, I really like to add something actually. I think one of the really important question to be answered especially working this way, domestic and family violence, as we all know, it's multiple layers there so communities are vital in this. With our projects as I said earlier we have been the project worker itself is part of the Community Leaders Network, which has been more than ten years in the Brisbane area and Queensland. It's ongoing coming up with the, you know, what matters to their community. It's a loose network, run by, administered by Multicultural Australia. So they were believing in us all the along with this project and they take it at their own and because also the settlement relationship, which the workers and also the partner organisations they have, there is a trust that was being developed, but also we have been aware during our community conversation, when we ran that, it's more than six months actually. In running that conversation we were, [it was] first planned for three months, but because the community wasn't ready to do those things and we were taking part by consulting the leaders or key community members, Make sure also we can use those gatekeepers, which community sometimes they're very suspicious, we were being very aware with that. So we acknowledge the loose network that the community already had so we have the formal discussions around using the formal leaders sometimes, it depends on the community, there is a loose group so we were being open with that and they they see us as a partner to solve the issue, which might matter to them or their problems in, good life, in their family, so that training we used and most of the time, in the beginning, with the community conversation to manage our good life in Australia, in here, so that training itself is helping and that relationship they have individually, leaders had a good relationship with those who run the community conversation that shows them actually we take those, whatever has been paid, for the better of the community. So again I think the question was there how you can build, it's not like, for short-term projects, but if you've been building for a long time and I think all the community organizations, all the service providers they should build that process. so communities observe and they understand sometimes they don't loudly say it, but they they look who's doing for good, really for true, change so that kind of relation is actually helping.

**MARIA:**
Thank you Seble. And now we have another question from the audience on service providers’ perceptions that culture can sometimes be used as a smokescreen for violence against women and they can be perceptions that we've always done it this way. How do you manage this? Kathryn, I'm going to go to you if you have a perspective on this question.

**KATHRYN:**
Hi, Maria. Yes, so we see this happening quite a bit in the work that we do and it can come up as a form of backlash in training, for example. And we really highlight that there is no, culture is not fixed, its constantly changing. There are cultures all around the world and within Australia and within the mainstream Anglo Australian culture that are patriarchal and perpetuate gender inequality. And that no one culture is more or less violent and that there's no excuse for violence. And it's not just about that's the way things are because there is no static I guess, traditional culture to point to. We're all living in the modern world and people around the world have progressed themselves and progressed others around them to combat gender inequality. So, yeah, it's when people use that we can challenge that by saying that we know the causes of violence are gender inequality and that is across all cultures.

**SEBLE:**
I just want to add also because, if we have time Maria?

**MARIA:**
Yeah yes we do. Go ahead Seble.

**SEBLE:**
I think that is really across what we receive because we had a target group which mainly we work closely with men and yes it comes [up] a lot, you know, sometimes also even from the women it comes up but one thing we just use the example of where we are at now, for example, things are not static because we are reflecting back the change is natural and adaptation is the way to continue our lives in a peaceful way so we actually get you know like they came from refugee or migrant background they're here, they adapt to a new life. Back home they cook something differently but they cook it differently in here how they address that. So the simple example in everyday, everyday life that change is constant and you have to be yourself adapting to that or you will have another consequence which is you know if you you choose to use violence to solve your conflict that is actually put you in jail at the end of the day it's illegal and it's not acceptable so we actually use example which is now, where they live now and what they have been living in the past or just a good example, one of our men's shed participants, it was it was really hard for him in the first few weeks to join in in the kitchen to prepare meals, he was saying you know in my culture would men can't even pass the kitchen door so how can I do this you know, it was too much for him to accept by a mature age and we were saying, it you know we are here now, because back home maybe women don't have jobs and things are not the same, but in here the kitchen, everything is different and the other men who are being trained say you know I wouldn't cook back home but I did I did it, it's really good to see this so challenging and create the space where you, can actually change yourself and reform yourself and that's at the end of the program, I'll tell you that gentlemen had joined in the kitchen, and he enjoyed it, you know being in that space learning new skills so I think, sometimes we need a simple example what they actually can, how they can, understand is important because sometimes too much wording around it, will not help.

**MARIA:**
Absolutely, thank you for acknowledging the way the culture changes and the adaptations that are happening. We do have time for two more questions. I might go to the question about how to manage both prevention and capacity building activities on a small budget. If I can go to Kathryn here to comment on that?

**KATHRYN:**
Yes, sorry, did you say how to manage prevention projects on a small budget?

**MARIA:**
Yes, prevention activities as well as capacity building activities on a small budget.

**KATHRYN:**
Yeah, so there's a couple of those few things that we do. So one of the things we do in Making the Links is making sure that the advisory group members for the project represent as many regional areas as possible across all of the areas we're working in. And that helps us to increase our outreach, but also to understand what's happening locally and to adapt and change the direction of our project as we need to. And we do on a number of our prevention projects, we also look at different opportunities to maximise networking, and collaboration across projects. So, for example, we have a number of projects with overlapping areas of work where we're delivering education sessions to women on gender equality and related topics. So, we have the gambling awareness project, and the rural reproductive health project connected to Making the links, that we're able to make contact about multiple projects at the same time.

So, that's a really strategic way to approach working with multiple stakeholders. And at the same time, I think I mentioned before, but that we planned our travel to different regions strategically for making sure that we aligned with activities that were already happening in the area, whether that's parenting groups or English classes, so that we can add on to where people are already meeting, and not have to, you know, over involve people, asking people to come together again, and then also adding to professional development calendars and asking organisations to meet more times than they're able to throughout the year. And also, what's great about having project partners is that we were able to coordinate a venue area and catering with local caterers, for example, through our project partners, and so for example, in Bendigo, with Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services, we used the Friday Food Safari to provide catering for our community education groups. So, that's, yeah, I think those are some ideas about how to work within a limited budget, which we all have to do.

**MARIA:**
Thank you, Kathryn. And we now have a related question about continuity and ensuring that the activities of the project or the impacts of the projects continue after the actual funding finishes. And I'll go to Dipti now for her perspective on this question of continuity.

**DIPTI:**
Thanks, Maria. Like, right from the beginning, the participatory action research approach, held good for us because the community was an equal partner and we invested heavily in developing communities' conceptual understanding and recognition of domestic violence. So, there were a lot of things that we did to empower the community. In fact, we got them trained in a research methodology, we've got them trained in understanding domestic violence services of recognized domestic violence awareness organizations and once you get a group of people to actually think and own the concept and literally localise it, it just helps it, make it much more sustainable. They are more self-reliant, you know, like the creative ideas that came up after that. They want to take it forward. In fact, with the South Sudanese community, they went on to start an adolescent girls group that meets every week, and this was their own initiative. It was not part of our plans. It was not part of what we had in our goals. It was not part of our milestones. It was their own initiative, or with a Punjabi community that used a service that was designed as part of the project in another Local Health District, in our local government area. So, they started owning it and they took the leadership to carry it on and there's different opportunities that arise when they take the risk and then when they give it a shot, so there were skill-building opportunities that they used initially in the project to continue what was initiated and to build on it and do it much, much better than what we could have ideated. So, going back again to the piece on trust, when we invest for the community to improve the values, and they go on to do bigger and better things than we could have imagined when we started. So, it was important to do the initial bonding and foundation laying right so that the project is much more sustainable. And another good thing I noticed is because of the investment in sustainability, we're able to tap into the richness and the resourcefulness of these communities we've worked with for other projects we're working on within our Local Health District, Maria.

**MARIA:**
Thank you, Dipti. And I know Seble, this is an area that you've been reflecting on quite a lot as well, did you have any comments about continuity?

**SEBLE:**
Yeah I think I'm you know but with a smaller money it's hard to deliver what we have being delivering, but because of the support we got from the other agencies which are for example, RAILS, a refugee legal service, and also a Multicultural Australia and also another bunch of service providers we have been working together, from getting a free space to deliver but also the key partner was the community leaders they have been volunteering they were been giving us a lot of their time to engage and that that's the key for us, partnership and collaboration and filling the gap is really helping us in terms of delivering beyond what our project is funded for so as I said we were being only funded to address the six communities from African community groups but we were managing to move to 27 community groups from 12 ethnic backgrounds and more than 167 people were engaged in our research in the community conversation and more than you know 200 people were being engaged in total in this program so that happened because we have that good relationship with other service providers and, for example, UQ [University of Queensland] was helping us in terms of finding literature and also RAILS is helping in terms of the legal training and in our messages, our micro-videos for the "Men managing change" program so all this happened because of that collaboration and support for each other and still ongoing, we are continuing doing it because that's one of the things we have learned from the community they don't like to see one thing only, you deliver the project and then gone by the time community are engaged. So we are now even continuing after the project funding period, we partner with TAFE to pilot a Good Life Learning from early on because of the community was asking, about early education, about gender and about also law in Australia, that is important so we were managing to deliver a 10 weeks program with partnering with RAILs and TAFE so this is helping to continue the work we've done because it's not one or two years or three years work, it needs to be continued so that partnership is really helpful for communities or a long-term change in this space.

**MARIA:**
Right, Seble, and some really good points there about partnership as well. As we come to the end of our question time. We have more than one question coming from the audience about how to evaluate interventions in this space and how to measure success factors in CALD communities. So, l'm now going to Seble for an answer on this question.

**SEBLE:**
Thanks, Maria. Yeah, I think the action research method is really useful. I keep saying that, you know, for your organisation having that in with us and you know using that methodology through our project is really key in terms of to be flexible again as we said earlier you know community, it takes time when it is for this multiple, multi layered issue so we use evaluation, first we plan with the community, leaders, bicultural workers to deliver some projects and then if it's not working we actually continuously, we have the backup and plan that with the participants how they want that program to continue so using those methodologies in our in our process I think actually helping us to engage a lot of community leaders and they've been more confident actually to engage, because it is not only one way it's a two way approach so that helped it in terms of for us to be flexible enough and also in the funding space you know funding provider, because we have ANROWS overseeing this and giving that freedom of changing constantly to fit the communities that actually was, whatever we achieve is because of those methodologies we use through our work.

**MARIA:**
Thanks Seble and I also get Kathryn now any last reflections on the evaluation in this initiative?

**KATHRYN:**
Hi, yes, there is not too much to add to what everyone said but I will say also, of course, in addition to evaluation forms for our funders in terms of the immediate and short term effectiveness of the program, it’s important, or what I like to do is take a lot of notes, and especially in training and education sessions, because then you're able to identify what are some of the common themes that come up and similar to what was mentioned before about that smokescreen, using cultures, is not to talk about gender equality or not to touch the subject of family violence, just being able to identify those common comments and then address ways to unpack those and to address them in future conversations.

And then also, it's also kind of following up with people so not just feedback forms, but they're after training, but also following up with participants in programs that you're working in. So, for example, we hear from women that there's women's leadership program called PACE through MCWH. What they've done since the program, so whether that's public speaking or new job opportunities, or even creating their own business, and linking up with local councils and local organisations to progress their own work. That's a really good indicator for us that the work we've been doing can be successful.

**MARIA:**
Thanks Kathryn, and I will check back in with Dipti now, if she wanted to add a few comments on research.

**DIPTI:**
Can you hear me Maria? MARIA: Yes I can. DIPTI: Yeah, what we actually liked about the participatory action research, like lot of my colleagues have , is that the partnership with the community and keeping community central and I'd like to take from Kathryn's notes about reflection. And not only reflecting individually for us as project workers, but reflection in collaboration with the community and this reflection helped us a lot to actually go back to the drawing board, like I mentioned before, and it was a shared ownership with both the project team and the communities. So, the outcomes were celebrated jointly and the failures of the challenges were fixed jointly. So, it was certainly mentioned through the constant cycle of learning, and applying and valuing the richness and strength that already exists within a community to address this issue of DV and jointly fighting against it and empowering communities, persisting, and make it more sustainable or efforts sustainable.

**MARIA:**
Thank you, Dipti. And thank you to all of our presenters, as well as the teams who sent in videos. A really big thank you has to go to all of the CALD PAR projects for their fantastic work in this initiative. Thank you to all of those of you who joined us today for our webinar. You can download the full research insights report and see the CALD PAR projects digital and project stories on the ANROWS website. If you are interested in viewing any more of our webinars, please also visit the ANROWS website. Thanks again everyone.

*(END OF TRANSCRIPT)*