



## Settlement Council of Australia

### AT A GLANCE



#### Target Participants

Migrant and refugee women across Victoria



#### Aim

To build a scalable workforce of bilingual women health educators across Victoria to disseminate women's health information including on the topic of COVID-19.



#### Organisations Involved

Multicultural Centre for Women's Health, GenVIC, Women's Health Loddon Mallee, Women's Health Grampians, Women's Health Gippsland, Women's Health in the North, Women's Health in the South East, Women's Health West, Women's Health East, Women's Health Victoria.



#### Location

Victoria



#### Funding

Working for Victoria Grant – Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions.

### CASE STUDY

## WOMHEn for Victoria Project 2021

The WOMHEn project, run by the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health (MCWH) employs 50 migrant and refugee women to form a rapid response health workforce. Funded by the Working for Victoria initiative, the project trains health educators to disseminate COVID-19 information and deliver multilingual health education in over 20 languages to migrant and refugee women.

### Description

COVID-19 has had a disproportionate impact on migrant and refugee women, and their communities. This project seeks to understand and harness the experiences, expertise and insights of migrant and refugee women and their understanding of their communities to shape education and responses to health issues. The project is training health educators to go into the community and listen to refugee and migrant women. The Multicultural Centre for Women's Health are taking this information and using it to develop resources and education that will make engagement effective, faster, empowering and respectful.

The project's aims are as follows:

- To provide a scaled up, coordinated, preventative health education and promotion workforce within the regions to ensure migrant and refugee women across Victoria have access to in-language, culturally appropriate health education and communication about COVID-19 and other health topics.
- To prevent further outbreaks of COVID-19 in migrant and refugee communities, particularly via family workplace transmission events, during stages of eased pandemic restriction.
- To ensure that migrant and refugee women's experiences of the health system and COVID-19 are understood and included in recovery initiatives and policy.



- To build a scalable backup workforce for intensive outreach with migrant & refugee women

To date, MCWH has provided Health Education Session delivery training to the workforce of 40 health educators (covering 20 languages) and outreach workers across the state of Victoria. This workforce is qualified to deliver in-language Health Education Sessions to migrant and refugee women communities.

The information delivered is in-language, culturally appropriate and non-hierarchical. Information is also supplemented by multilingual resources



## Challenges

**MCWH found two key challenges in the development and delivery of this project, including:**

1. Managing the delivery of health education sessions during state-wide lockdowns proved difficult. Some health education sessions had to be cancelled, others postponed, and others had reduced attendance due to moving from face-to-face to online.
2. The short-term nature of the project.

## Outcomes

Outcomes so far:

1. 73 health education sessions delivered to date
2. 1559 women reached through these sessions to date
3. Health education session requests declined due to reaching capacity to deliver health education sessions

## Key Learnings

**This experience has generated three key learnings:**

1. There is a high demand for health education sessions delivered in-language to migrant and refugee women groups
2. Information about mental health and COVID-19 topics were in high-demand in migrant and refugee women communities
3. There are many highly trained and educated women from migrant and refugee women in Victoria who applied for the positions as health educators and outreach workers

For more information visit

[WOMHEN: Workforce of Multilingual Health Educators | Gender Equity Victoria \(genvic.org.au\)](http://WOMHEN: Workforce of Multilingual Health Educators | Gender Equity Victoria (genvic.org.au))

