

BRIDGING THE GAP

PARTNERSHIPS FOR CHANGE IN REFUGEE CHILD & FAMILY HEALTH

NEWSLETTER #10 MAY 2016

“(Professional development) gave me greater confidence as a health professional and inspiration from the speakers”

RESPONDENT FROM THE EVALUATION OF BRIDGING THE GAP PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

New partners join Bridging the Gap

Bridging the Gap is pleased to formally welcome two new partners, Victorian Cooperative on Children's Services for Ethnic Groups (VICSEG) New Futures and Mercy Health. Both join the partnership in recognition of their support for Healthy Happy Beginnings the group pregnancy care program with the Karen community (from Burma) in the west. Werribee Mercy joins as the maternity provider for the program, and has commenced providing interpreter assisted pregnancy care and co-facilitated group information sessions with women and families. VICSEG New Futures has been pivotal in providing a well-received and attended community-led service through the continued support of Waan (Refugee Family Mentor) who we profile later in the newsletter. A warm welcome to VICSEG and Mercy Health.

- All responders reported that they applied key learnings and skills to their roles through:
 - participation in the quality improvement initiatives
 - self-reflection and awareness of practice
 - being aware of referral and support agencies
- Responders reported that enablers to sustain their skills and learnings were through:
 - the quality improvement projects
 - investment in on-going professional development
 - providing opportunities to get together and share experiences with colleagues

Some feedback is provided below:

The professional development gave me... *“Better understanding. Increased empathy. Looking at things from a different perspective. Increased awareness.”*

I have applied learnings through... *“Working with women and families in the birthing environment, ensuring they are given opportunities to ask questions, seek interpreter for understanding and, being mindful of the manner in which we behave and support women experiencing previous difficulties in their homeland.”*

A big thank you to all who contributed to the evaluation as we are now using the findings to inform future professional development activities.

Evaluation of professional development

In January this year an evaluation of all professional development activities that have been conducted to support Bridging the Gap and the quality improvement initiatives was conducted. Participants from all professional development activities were invited to complete an online survey seeking their views and experiences, knowledge and skills development and how they applied these to their roles. Over 40 people participated in the survey. A snapshot of the survey findings is provided below:

- People from all of the implementation sites took part in the survey
- The majority of the survey participants were midwives

PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

MURDOCH CHILDRENS RESEARCH INSTITUTE

VICTORIAN FOUNDATION FOR SURVIVORS OF TORTURE

MONASH HEALTH

WESTERN HEALTH

CITY OF GREATER DANDENONG

CITY OF WYNDHAM

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

MERCY HEALTH

VICSEG NEW FUTURES

Introducing Waan Tardif

Waan Tardif is a Bicultural Refugee Family Resource Mentor and a key team member of Healthy Happy Beginnings which provides community-based pregnancy care to Karen women and families from Burma. Waan provides culturally sensitive support for women and families as they navigate their way in a new country. We asked Waan:

What does your role involve?

My role involves supporting pregnant women to attend the maternal and child health centre at Sister Rita Douglas where we run the Healthy Happy Beginnings program and to provide them with the opportunity to meet other women from the same community and background. I support women to have easier access to health care services and facilitate their meeting of the Mercy midwives and Wyndham MCH nurses to build trusting relationships. My role also involves assisting midwives, maternal and child health (MCH) and families to work together with cultural awareness within a western model of healthcare delivery.

What aspects of your role are you proud of?

I am very proud to see the women relieved, happy and comfortable meeting the midwives and MCH nurses and knowing that their journey with the pregnancy group will be full of information, in a trusting environment where strong relationships are fostered. I enjoy making the sessions fun and relaxing in a style that is reminiscent of back home in the village.

What are your hopes for Healthy Happy Beginnings and Bridging the Gap?

My hope is to continue supporting these women by providing care in their own language and for the whole Healthy Happy Beginnings team to perform at their optimum to deliver the best possible care to the women throughout their pregnancy and the early years of their child's life.



Waan Tardif (right) with families who attended the launch of Healthy Happy Beginnings

Bridging the Gap's contribution to:

The Royal Commission into Family Violence

The Royal Commission into Family Violence has delivered an extensive report of practical recommendations of which Bridging the Gap CI Stephanie Brown and implementation partner Bernie Harrison contributed testimony. Bridging the Gap was referenced in the Royal Commission's recommendations as a recent development likely to support improvements in maternal and child health practice in response to family violence. The full report can be accessed at: <http://www.rcfv.com.au/Report-Recommendations>

Ending preventable stillbirths

It was pleasing to see that Bridging the Gap was highlighted in the recently published Lancet series on ending preventable stillbirths <http://www.thelancet.com/series/ending-preventable-stillbirths>.

One of the papers in the series discusses the inequities in stillbirth rates that exist within high income countries and offers that universal services supplement care to support populations of high risk such as women of refugee background. Bridging the Gap has been mentioned as an innovative, community-led approach to providing quality, culturally-responsive, accessible care to address refugee maternal and child health inequalities.

[http://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736\(15\)01020-X.pdf](http://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736(15)01020-X.pdf)

New papers

Health Literacy

A paper published in the Medical Journal of Australia provides a perspective on health literacy in refugee populations postulating that in responding to the unique circumstances of refugees, multifaceted and multidisciplinary interventions and policies will be required to improve health literacy. A particular focus should be on building confidence and providing the support and resources for people to manage their health.

<https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2016/204/1/improving-health-literacy-refugee-populations>

Language in labour

Enabling interpreter use in labour: quality improvement to bridge the communication gap for women with low English proficiency is the name of the conference poster presented by Jane Yelland at the International Forum on Quality & Safety in Healthcare in Gothenburg, Sweden in April this year. Jane highlighted the valuable work and outstanding outcomes of the Language in Labour project and how collaboration of service managers and clinicians in the design and implementation of change has supported the initiative. The design, implementation and evaluation of the project as displayed in the conference poster is illustrated in the figure below.

Jane also attended the BMJ Outcomes Summit and the Quality Improvement Science and Research Symposium, and met with academics and provider stakeholders in Stockholm and Birmingham, UK. There is considerable interest from a range of overseas managers, clinicians and researchers in Bridging the Gap, particularly in terms of what we have learnt about addressing health inequalities in disadvantaged populations.

About Bridging the Gap

Bridging the Gap is a partnership between Healthy Mothers Healthy Families research group at Murdoch Childrens Research Institute and the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (Foundation House), maternity and maternal & child health services in Melbourne's south east and west, primary health care networks, local and state government.

Bridging the Gap is supported by contributions from the partner organisations and a partnership grant from the National Health and Medical Research Council (2013-2017).

For more information about Bridging the Gap: <https://www.mcrci.edu.au/bridging-the-gap>
This newsletter has been prepared by the Healthy Mothers Healthy Families research group at MCRI. For more information please contact:

Wendy Dawson
✉ wendy.dawson@mcrci.edu.au ☎ 9936 6051

Danielle Vanpraag
✉ danielle.vanpraag@mcrci.edu.au ☎ 9936 6084

Elisha Riggs
✉ elisha.riggs@mcrci.edu.au ☎ 9936 6646

Jane Yelland
✉ jane.yelland@mcrci.edu.au ☎ 9936 6673

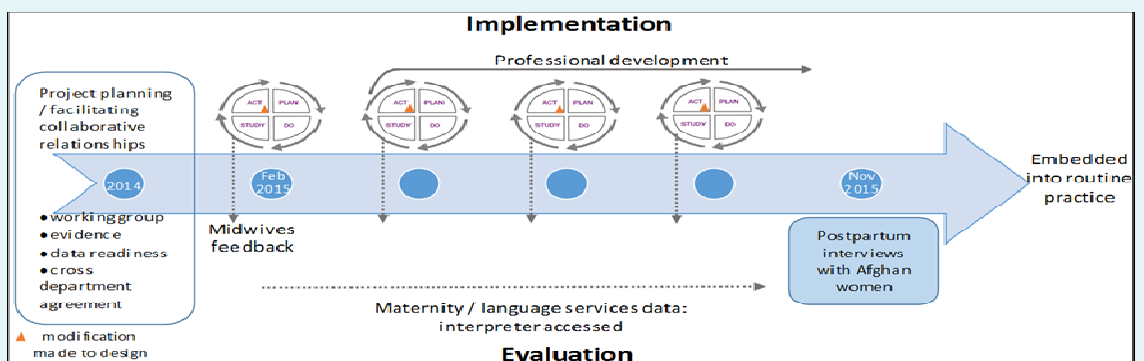


Figure 1. Design, implementation and evaluation design of the Language in Labour project