



# HIV AND MOBILITY IN AUSTRALIA

Peer education with people from  
migrant backgrounds at the Centre for  
Culture, Ethnicity & Health



## Project Organisation

The Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health (CEH) aims to improve the health and wellbeing of people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. The Multicultural Health and Support Services (MHSS) within CEH aims to prevent sexually transmissible infections (STI) and blood borne viruses (BBV) in refugee and migrant communities.

## Project Summary

Peer Education is a form of informal education where peers learn from peers. The Peer Education program aims to improve awareness and dispel misconceptions about BBVs and STIs among refugee and migrant communities by working with communities. Peer educators are recruited from the community and provided training about these infections and how to deliver interactive education sessions.

**Location:** Victoria

**Population involved:** People from migrant or refugee backgrounds

**Duration:** One migrant community per year

**Funding:** Victorian Department of Health and Human Services



*Two peer educators (also radio hosts) with an MHSS staff member promoting the MHSS peer education program on 3CR Community Radio 855AM – Arada Ethiopian Show in October 2014*

## Project Aims

1. Increase the educational capacity and reach of the MHSS program enabling closer and more effective engagement with priority culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities affected by, or vulnerable to, BBV/STI; and
2. Create a sustainable program of culturally authentic peer education through consultation and collaboration with priority CALD communities.

## Road Map Action Areas

The [HIV and Mobility in Australia: Road Map for Action](#) proposes 71 strategies under five action areas to address HIV in mobile populations. This project addresses the following action areas and strategies.

### Action Area 3) Community Mobilisation

*Strategy 3.2.* Develop HIV knowledge and capacity amongst migrant community, cultural and spiritual leaders.

### Action Area 4) Development of Services for Mobile or Migrant People and Groups

*Strategy 4.3* Further develop programs and services to be delivered by peers in migrant and multicultural organisations and HIV sector organisations

## Measuring Achievement

An independent process evaluation by Burnet Institute was conducted in 2014, which involved the interviewing of past peer educators. An internal process evaluation was conducted in 2015. These reports measured project reach and feedback from peer educators and community members, including information learnt about sexual health and what could be improved.

## Project Successes

The training received by Peer Educators enabled them to successfully deliver peer education sessions to community participants. Maximum attendance was achieved by community participants.

The use of bilingual peer educators was very important and facilitated the implementation of the program; the groups reported that participants enjoyed the session being delivered and discussed in their community language.

## Project Challenges

A barrier is that reach is limited due to funding. When participants were asked about how the education sessions could be improved, they suggested that the session should target more people, particularly young people, new arrivals and those experiencing substance use. They also suggested the sessions to be ongoing and to include information about other blood borne viruses and health services in Australia.

## Lessons Learnt

A lesson learnt is that many existing relationships can be lost if there is no avenue for continued communication between communities and the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity & Health. Therefore, the Multicultural Community Action Network was developed.

## Future Work

Following an evaluation by the Burnet Institute, the Multicultural Community Action Network (M-CAN) was developed. The network is developing long-term partnerships with Peer Educators, other relevant community leaders and the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity & Health. There are four M-CAN forums a year. These forums provide opportunities for networking as well as learning new skills for advocacy. More information is available online at [www.ceh.org.au/multicultural-health-support-service/](http://www.ceh.org.au/multicultural-health-support-service/)

## Additional Information

To view a media story about the Peer Education program, please click visit [www.ceh.org.au/role-peer-education-preventing-bbv-sti-transmission/](http://www.ceh.org.au/role-peer-education-preventing-bbv-sti-transmission/)

## Contact

For further information, please visit the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity & Health website at <http://www.ceh.org.au/>

If you have any questions about this work, please contact Alison Coelho (Stream Leader Multicultural Health Improvement) at [alisonc@ceh.org.au](mailto:alisonc@ceh.org.au)



This document was published by the **Community of Practice for Action on HIV and Mobility (CoPAHM)**. CoPAHM was established to keep HIV and mobility issues on the national agenda, and to progress action areas highlighted within the *HIV and mobility in Australia: Road Map for Action*.

To find out more details about *The Road Map* or *CoPAHM*, please [click here](#) or email [copahm@curtin.edu.au](mailto:copahm@curtin.edu.au)

#### **Acknowledgments**

Thankyou to Phuong Nguyen at the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health for providing the information provided on the *Peer Education* project. This document was produced October, 2016.