Economic and financial security is central to the wellbeing of women and children during and following experiences of domestic violence.”

Landscapes – State of Knowledge – Building effective policies and services to promote women’s economic security following domestic violence: State of

Three E’s to Freedom

Education, Employment and Empowerment – A Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy

Core Structure

The Three E’s to Freedom Action Research Pilot has been designed to commence with a refugee cohort. It is anticipated that subsequent programs based on capacity built and learning gained through the pilot will focus on other vulnerable cohorts such as Indigenous women and women with a disability. The fifty two week program centres on a thirty eight week intensive education to employment program for adult women from a refugee background living in Coffs Harbour. Twenty six weeks will be focused on the educative component of the program and twelve weeks will be devoted to employment related activities (work experience, job seeking and post placement support). There is an eight week development stage, where the steering committee (key stakeholders including social researchers, employers, educators and community services) will be established; data collection and evaluation strategies agreed and participants selected. There is also a six week analysis stage prior to project completion.

We anticipate that pilot outcomes including what worked, what we learned and recommendations for further research or future programs will be published in partnership with our research partners within eight weeks of the program completion. The pilot has specifically been designed to be completed over 12 months to provide maximum value for money and to harness participant and stakeholder buy in. Participation in the program for stakeholders and clients is by competitive application with capacity to commit to the agreed program schedule a
key determinant of the selection process. For the purposes of this pilot vocational goals will focus on the three industries considered most likely to support paid work for this cohort in Coffs Harbour.

- The Care Industry (Aged, Disability, Child)
- The Berry Industry (Blueberry, Raspberry Production & Harvesting)
- The Hospitality Industry (Commercial Cooking, Cleaning)

The 26 week client education program will include a range of hard and soft skills development as well as strategies to support the development of unpinning skills, such as work fitness. It is anticipated that each client will have access to:

- English Language Education - including workplace English tuition and support
- Vocational Education – industry specific skill set from Certificate I, II or III as determined by vocational goal
- Support to attain provisional driver’s license
- Work Fitness – a program to support physical and psychological fitness for work
- Communications Training – basic IT and job seeking skills
- Advanced Life Skills – Financial literacy, futures planning, assertiveness
- Social Skills – Parenting, conflict resolution

Each client will be allocated a Case Manager to work with her throughout the program to provide additional support to address individual barriers and unforeseen challenges. Case Managers will offer direct support as well as referral pathways depending on client needs.

The 12 week employment component of the program will be further supported by a group of industry mentors who will be assigned to each participant to support their workplace experience and to help the participants develop workplace confidence and reflect on Australian workplace culture.

Industry mentors and prospective employers will be supported through formal and informal processes to develop the skills necessary to work with and supervise women from a refugee background. Formal training will include a competency based skills set from Australia’s National Community Services Training Package as well as ‘recognise and respond appropriately to domestic and family violence’ which is part of the DV-Alert Training Response funded by Department of Social Services under gender equality for women.

**Primary Pilot Outcome(s)**

Under The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children Australia’s vision is for a future where women and children are living free from domestic and family violence. The National Plan acknowledges that culturally and linguistic diverse (CALD) women and their children are currently over represented and under-researched in this context. This pilot aims to address this issue by providing a unique action research approach to a highly targeted program of support. We are looking for evidence in practice to support the following assertions:

- Women from a refugee background are less likely to be victims of domestic and family violence if they are empowered, educated and employed.
- Programs of support for vulnerable women need to be centrally coordinated, holistic, responsive, flexible and collaborative to achieve longer term outcomes.
- Regional cities present an opportunity for vulnerable women to develop self-determination and self-reliance which will ultimately support a faster transition to social, economic and political participation.
The social change required to support vulnerable women, in this case women from a refugee background to achieve social, economic and political participation in Australian life needs to be driven by the whole community – industry, academia, social services, education, Government as well as by individuals.

Programs aimed at fostering empowerment will be more successful if they are designed to provide participants with opportunities to choose and to lead.

Programs which support women will be more successful if they include resources to meet the needs of each women’s children and immediate family members.

Secondary Outcomes

For the participant women and their families the Three E’s pilot may lead to one or a number of the following outcomes:

- Improved physical and emotional well being
- Improved family and social relationships
- Increased independence
- Improved self-esteem
- A driver’s license
- Better English
- Further study
- Paid work

Supporting and Informing Background

Anglicare North Coast

Established in 1999 Anglicare North Coast is a non-government organisation based on the North Coast of NSW. A member of Anglicare Australia, our primary objective is to support and empower disadvantaged and vulnerable people to achieve dignity and a fulfilling life through the delivery of services which address social, economic and cultural disadvantage.

We are currently managing a variety of government funded programs of assistance including Humanitarian Settlement Services, Complex Case Support, Community Housing, Financial Counselling, Problem Gambling Support and Partners in Recovery (Mental Health Support Program). We have five operational locations, Coffs Harbour, Grafton, Maclean, Lismore and Ballina with 32 staff and 149 volunteers.