ANGLICARESA

BoraCare

Flinders University

Community Connections

Exploring Health and Wellbeing through Community-Led Engagement



AUTHORED BY:

Mary Awata
Chief Executive officer - Director
Boracare
E: mary@boracare.com.au
W: www.boracare.com.au

Dr Lavender Otieno
Bsc, BHMS (Hon), PhD
Research Fellow
Discipline of Trauma and Injury
Flinders Health & Medical Research Institute
College of Medicine and Public Health
P: +61 8 8432 4854
E: lavender.otieno@flinders.edu.au

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Objective

Loneliness and social isolation are pressing concerns among migrant communities in South Australia. This project engaged culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups in Adelaide's northern suburbs to identify contributors to social isolation and explore activities or interventions that could be supported through funding to strengthen social connectedness.

Methods

Between October 2025 and January 2026, seven 60-minute roundtable discussions were held with members of the Chin, Somali, Liberian, Equatorian (South Sudan), Nubian (South Sudan), Congolese, and Vietnamese communities. Facilitators recorded key points, which were later analysed using a reflexive thematic approach. Discussions highlighted both enablers and barriers to social connectedness, as well as existing community activities that foster connection.

Findings

Five funding applications were submitted at the conclusion of the project to Anglicare to support community events, including:

1. South Sudanese Equatorian Cultural Day 2026
2. The Liberian Independence Day Celebration & Community Empowerment Program
3. The 78th Chin National Day – Burmese Community
4. Vietnamese Women's Association - Community Circle
5. The Somali Community Social Connection and Wellbeing Program

Nubian (South Sudan) community did not submit an application at the time of this report and a concept has been submitted by the Congolese community for further review. Communities identified enablers such as annual celebrations, intergenerational activities (e.g., language schools, community businesses), and cultural events. Barriers included limited language proficiency, demanding work schedules, and the restricted capacity of volunteers and committee members.

Conclusion

The community connections project successfully identified community-based activities that could be supported to encourage social connectedness among CALD groups in Adelaide's northern suburbs. However, sustainability remains a challenge due to resource and staffing constraints, particularly for new and emerging communities. Future funding should consider additional support to enable community members to dedicate time to welfare activities without undue financial or familial burden.

INTRODUCTION

South Australia is home to a highly diverse population, with approximately 25% of residents born overseas, representing more than 214 countries and speaking up to 248 languages.[1] These culturally and linguistically diverse communities contribute significant strengths to the state, including strong family and community networks, multilingualism, adaptability, cultural knowledge, and collective resilience.[2] These strengths often serve as critical resources for navigating the complex process of resettlement, fostering belonging and enhancing community wellbeing.

Despite these strengths, resettlement can be a challenging experience for many individuals in this context. Separation from family and friends, limited social networks, language barriers, racial discrimination and economic hardship all heighten the risk of loneliness and social isolation among newly arrived or emerging communities.[3] Research consistently shows that migrant and refugee communities report lower levels of wellbeing and life satisfaction compared with native-born residents.[4] Rebuilding social connections therefore becomes a critical, yet often overlooked, component of the resettlement journey.

Social connectedness is a well-established protective factor that supports wellbeing across the life course.[5] The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines social connection as the ways people relate to and interact with others, while loneliness is described as the painful feeling that arises when there is a gap between desired and actual social relationships.[6] For migrant communities, the absence of close relationships and a sense of belonging can contribute to increased stress, isolation, and physical health challenges, ultimately hindering the resettlement process.[7]

This project aimed to explore these issues through community-led dialogue with culturally and linguistically diverse groups in Adelaide's northern suburbs. These conversations focused on understanding the factors contributing to loneliness among migrant communities in South Australia and identifying activities and interventions that could strengthen social connection and support community wellbeing.

METHODS

Fifteen ethnospecific community groups were initially approached to participate in the program through established professional relationships between Boracare and the broader communities. Community leaders were initially contacted by Mary Awata to establish an introductory meeting to discuss the appropriateness of the program for their communities. During these meetings, leaders were provided with a brief project overview to enable them to consult with their community members and determine whether there was sufficient interest to proceed (Appendix A).

Once interest was confirmed, community leaders liaised with the research team to schedule focus group or round table discussions. A total of seven focus groups were conducted with leaders and members representing seven community groups:

1. *Chin Community*
2. *Somali Community*
3. *Liberian Community*
4. *Equatorial Community (South Sudan)*
5. *Nubian Community (South Sudan)*
6. *Congolese community*
7. *Vietnamese Community*

Each focus group or round table explored the enablers and barriers to social connectedness within each community. Participants also discussed current initiatives that support social connectedness and identified potential future activities that could strengthen community cohesion. No audio-recordings were collected however facilitators did take detailed notes during each session. A reflexive thematic analysis approach was taken to identify overarching themes in each discussion

With a key emphasis on community engagement and relationship building, the project team held several follow-up meetings with community members to refine priority areas and identify activities suitable for funding applications. These meetings were also held to ensure that all activities were community led and driven whilst being supported by the project team. A representative from Anglicare attended these meetings to support communities in preparing and compiling their applications prior to submission.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A total of seven focus group and round-table discussions were conducted over a five-month period (October 2025–January 2026). All communities required more than one meeting to ensure all perspectives were captured. Discussions focused on identifying enablers and barriers to social connection, as well as documenting current activities used to promote social connection. Five applications were submitted to Anglicare for funding at the conclusion of the project (Table 1). Four out of five centred on major annual community events with the intention that these events will create opportunities for the development of smaller activities that aim to promote social connection.

Table 1: Community-led activities submitted for funding

Activity	Description
South Sudanese Equatorial Cultural Day 2026	The Cultural Day is a full-day, family-friendly event that combines celebration with community development. It features traditional music, dance, drumming, and storytelling by community groups, youth ensembles, and elders, alongside exhibitions

	of attire, artefacts, photographs, and migration narratives. Traditional food prepared by community members fosters sharing and conversation, while youth are actively engaged as performers, MCs, volunteers, and workshop leaders. Sports and recreational activities encourage participation from younger families, and community information stalls provide culturally approachable access to services in education, employment, health, youth support, and civic participation. Together, these elements create an inclusive space that strengthens cultural identity, intergenerational connection, and community wellbeing.
The Liberian Independence Day Celebration & Community Empowerment Program	The Liberian Independence Day Celebration, held annually on July 26th, is a cornerstone event for the Liberian diaspora in South Australia, commemorating the nation's 1847 independence while symbolising resilience and unity after years of civil conflict. The event fosters cohesion among Liberia's 16 ethnic groups through traditional food, music, dance, storytelling, and cultural attire, embodying "unity in diversity." Beyond the celebration itself, it anchors a year-round suite of activities including weekly soccer sessions, elder day trips, the Kendeja Festival, and the annual IE vs. Barrolle soccer and kickball games, all of which strengthen intergenerational bonds and community wellbeing. Importantly, the initiative extends its impact beyond the Liberian community, drawing participation from other culturally diverse groups and contributing to broader social cohesion across South Australia's multicultural landscape.
The 78th Chin National Day – Burmese Community	Chin National Day, celebrated annually on February 20th, is a global event for Burmese Chin communities to honour their heritage, traditions, and values. The celebration features cultural activities such as dance, fashion shows showcasing traditional attire and artefacts, and other performances reflecting the significance of the day. Sports competitions held in the lead-up culminate with awards presented during the event. Supported by dedicated community members and volunteers, the celebration attracts approximately 300–400 participants from the Chin Falam community, fostering cultural pride and community connection.

Vietnamese Women's Association - Community Circle	The project will run for 10 months and deliver weekly, interactive face-to-face sessions designed to foster social connection, skill sharing, and community engagement. Activities will include English conversation classes, games, cooking demonstrations, storytelling, and personal experience sharing, complemented by excursions to local historical sites and points of interest. Each session, lasting three hours (or up to six hours for excursions), will be facilitated in a supportive and inclusive environment to encourage active participation. With a maximum of 16 attendees per session, the program is intentionally flexible and responsive to participants' interests, creating opportunities for shared learning, cultural exchange, and meaningful social interaction.
The Somali Community Social Connection and Wellbeing Program	The Somali Community Social Connection and Wellbeing Program (May 2026–May 2027) will deliver a range of new daily, weekly and annual activities designed to reduce isolation, strengthen cultural connection and improve physical and mental wellbeing. This will be designed for Somali community members aged 20–64, culturally recognised elders, and newly arrived migrants across metropolitan and Northern Adelaide. The program will include daily social connection sessions (five days per week) featuring structured games, guided discussions, elder mentorship, and weekly group walks; a weekly outdoor walking and light-fitness program; and three major community events. These are the Somali Cultural Night, the Eid Festival and the Eid Pilgrimage celebration. Together, these activities aim to increase social cohesion, enhance self-reported wellbeing, boost regular physical activity, and deepen intergenerational cultural ties, supporting the community to build belonging and realise their full potential.

Enablers for social connection

Across groups, participants frequently mentioned annual community events such as National day celebrations, Sports days, New year festivals as key enablers of social connection. These events were described as helping to create relational spaces where people with shared cultural backgrounds and values can come together.[8] Community

participation is known to positively impact migrants' psychological integration and sense of belonging in a new space. [9] Participating in community activities helps individuals feel supported, included and at ease thereby contributing to positive mental health outcomes and healthy behaviours.[10, 11] It also provides individuals with opportunities to build confidence and preserve dignity while navigating life in a different country.[12, 13] Community leaders echoed these benefits, noting that annual events bring together people of all ages, genders, and ethnicities, renewing a shared sense of identity, purpose, and dignity. These gatherings also create opportunities for interaction between migrant communities and the broader local population. Studies show that activities involving both migrants and locals helps members of smaller migrant communities feel valued and recognised as vital contributors to the broader society.[12-14]

Activities that promote intergenerational connection were consistently identified as important enablers of social cohesion within migrant communities. Native language schools particularly Saturday schools and community run language programs, were highlighted as key interventions for strengthening bonds between older and younger generations.[15] These activities encourage intergenerational ties between parents, elders and children thereby reinforcing family cohesion.[15] They also promote community networking and cultural continuity by creating regular meeting points where families build friendships and creating environments where traditions, stories and practices are preserved.[16] These traditions help migrants maintain a sense of identity across generations. Furthermore, community-based language environments provide psychologically safe spaces where migrant families feel less judged and more confident engaging in cultural and linguistic expression.[17]

Community business was also identified as an important contributor to social connection. Periods of collective distress such as loss of community members or ongoing conflict in home countries were often described as powerful, though painful, catalysts for social connection. These shared experiences of loss and trauma foster solidarity and collective resilience by bridging gaps between individuals and strengthening support networks that facilitate community healing.[18] Communities reported coming together to provide financial assistance and to share cultural and religious practices to support affected families. While these moments of collective response can deepen bonds, it is also important to note that intense shared trauma may create a heavy emotional atmosphere and, without adequate support, can contribute to further social withdrawal and isolation.[19]

Barriers to social connection

Despite ongoing efforts to ensure social connection, several barriers to social connection were also identified.

A commonly discussed challenge was limited language proficiency which significantly affected the settlement of newly arrived migrant individuals and communities. Language barriers make it difficult to navigate essential systems and services in the host country thereby generating feelings of shame, frustration and reduced confidence.[20] These experiences can discourage individuals from participating in community activities or accessing shared spaces, increasing the risk of social withdrawal and isolation.[9]

One other commonly cited challenge was the impact of fulltime workloads on and individuals' capacity to engage socially. Long and demanding work hours, often extending into weekends in some instances, limits the time and energy available to build culturally centred relationships outside of work and home. While employment is crucial for economic stability in most households, participants noted that the intensity of many jobs leaves little capacity for community participation. As a result, individuals become socially isolated despite a desire to connect.

Finally, communities also identified the limited capacity of volunteers who run most programs and events as an additional barrier to social connection. Most communities do not have designated staff members dedicated to the delivery of community initiatives. These initiatives are typically delivered on an in-kind, volunteer basis, and volunteers are often professionals managing full-time workloads and family responsibilities. As a result, their ability to consistently plan, coordinate, and sustain programs that foster social connection is constrained. Many community groups also lack a designated physical space, which limits their ability to host regular activities and reduces opportunities for ongoing social engagement. In addition, most events rely heavily on financial contributions from community members or steering committee members, making them difficult to sustain long term. These resource constraints often lead to sporadic or one-off activities that may initiate but not deepen social connections among community members.

Protective factors to supporting social connectedness

Despite well-documented structural and interpersonal barriers to social connection, several protective factors were identified across the different communities.

Community leaders play a central role in sustaining social connectedness despite the resourcing constraints. Their ongoing commitments to meeting regularly, identifying areas of concern and coordinating informal interventions, often using personal funds, help strengthen opportunities for social connectedness and reinforce a sense of collective responsibility. Evidence does show that structured opportunities for community participation and leadership engagement enhances both general health and subjective wellbeing during resettlement especially when leaders act as cultural brokers and facilitators of social ties.[21]

A shared commitment to preserving culture and identity also served as a protective factor against social isolation. Many communities, such as the Chin community, encouraged young people to participate in cultural events and prioritised intergenerational knowledge transfer. Self-identify, cultural continuity and community support often act as central protective factors for health and wellbeing, helping individuals maintain a sense of belonging and coherence during resettlement.[22] These practices not only support cultural continuity but also fostered belonging and intergenerational connection.

Communities also demonstrated a notable reliance in the face of shared traumatic experiences, including histories of war and conflict in their countries of origin. While exposure to trauma increases vulnerability to poor health outcomes, the collective resilience and mutual support within these communities helps to mitigate the risk of social isolation. Strong community ties, shared cultural frameworks and collective coping strategies help buffer long-term impacts of trauma and support more positive resettlement trajectories.[23] This collective resilience helps communities maintain a forward-looking orientation and provides an emotional buffer against isolation by reinforcing solidarity and mutual support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussions with community members and leaders highlighted that migrant communities are well placed to identify the drivers of social isolation and to design culturally relevant solutions that strengthen social connectedness. Supporting the development of community-led initiatives is therefore essential for sustaining progress in reducing social isolation. However, resource constraints remain the most significant barrier to establishing and maintaining long-term, community-driven programs. Additional consideration is needed for how best to support the community leaders who are responsible for organising and delivering these initiatives. Without ongoing financial support for staffing, coordination and access to dedicated spaces, the development of sustainable activities is limited and may inadvertently worsen existing concerns of social isolation.

The community connections project demonstrated the importance of placing community-led initiatives and relationship-building at the centre of project design and delivery. By implementing culturally appropriate and safe recruitment strategies - particularly through the involvement of trusted CALD community leaders such as Mary Awata and Lavender Otieno - the project ensured that funding reached ethnospecific communities who are often overlooked in mainstream systems. Ongoing engagement across multiple sessions enabled the project team to build meaningful relationships and tailor support to the specific priorities of each community, ultimately strengthening the effectiveness of the initiative. Future work should recognise the time and resourcing required to build genuine collaboration between funders and CALD communities.

Capacity building was also a core component of the project. All activities and discussions were community-led and co-designed with support from the project team. Community leaders reported that working closely with the team to prepare funding applications increased their confidence and sense of empowerment for future opportunities, while further deepening trust between community groups and the project team. Future initiatives could build on this by investing in systematic community mapping to better understand local champions, leaders, strengths, social assets, needs, and opportunities for collaboration. It is strongly recommended that any mapping or assessment processes be undertaken in partnership with communities to ensure that findings remain relevant, respectful, and actionable. This includes an understanding of the sensitive nature and patience requited to build ongoing healthy relationships with communities as well as the level of cultural awareness required to leverage on strong cultural connections for successful mapping.

CONCLUSION

A key learning from this project was the value of intentionally embedding the Community Connections Program within CALD community contexts. This was the first program to adopt such an approach and it proved essential for engaging communities that often face systemic barriers to participation. By investing time in relationship-building and community-led guidance, the project team was able to play a pivotal role in ensuring that engagement was meaningful, respectful and responsive to community needs. Recognising this shift is important, as it represents a significant evolution in how our programs understand and support CALD communities.

This project functioned as an initiative to engage members of culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Adelaide's northern suburbs and to identify activities that could help address persistent experiences of loneliness. Through established community-engagement methods and a co-design approach, the project facilitated meaningful dialogue across seven community groups and supported the delivery of culturally grounded activities aimed at strengthening social connection. These conversations have laid an important foundation for future work to enhance health and wellbeing among CALD communities by centring their voices, priorities, and lived experiences.

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Appendices

Community Profiles

Chin Community (Myanmar)

The Chin community in South Australia originates from Chin State in northwestern Myanmar, a mountainous region home to one of Myanmar's ethnic minorities. Many Chin people fled persecution and instability, arriving in Australia through humanitarian programs. Adelaide became a key settlement area, and in 2017 the Chin Community of Adelaide was formally established to provide advocacy, cultural education, and humanitarian support. The community places strong emphasis on preserving language, faith, and cultural traditions, while also supporting members in employment, education, and integration. Their resilience is evident in the way they have rebuilt lives, created mutual support networks, and contributed to South Australia's multicultural identity. The Chin community's strengths lie in solidarity, cultural pride, and leadership, which they channel into both local initiatives and transnational humanitarian efforts.

Somali Community

The Somali community in South Australia is part of a broader national diaspora that grew significantly after the outbreak of civil war in Somalia in the early 1990s. Many Somalis arrived as refugees, often via Kenya, and settled in Adelaide. The Somali Communities Council in Woodville provides leadership, advocacy, and cultural support, ensuring that Somali traditions, language, and Islamic faith remain strong. Somali families are known for their resilience, resourcefulness, and entrepreneurial spirit, with many establishing businesses and contributing to civic life. Oral storytelling, poetry, and cultural celebrations enrich South Australia's diversity, while younger generations increasingly engage in education and professional pathways. The Somali community's strengths include adaptability, strong family networks, and cultural vibrancy, which continue to shape their contributions to the state's multicultural fabric.

Liberian Community

The Liberian Community of South Australia (LICOSA), founded in 2002, began with a small group of families and has since grown significantly. Many members arrived through Australia's humanitarian entrant program following Liberia's 14-year civil conflict. LICOSA works to preserve Liberian cultural identity, celebrate heritage, and provide mutual support. The community emphasizes resilience, cultural pride, and integration, while maintaining strong ties to Liberia's traditions and history. Liberians in South Australia have demonstrated remarkable adaptability, with younger generations excelling in education and professional fields. Cultural events, music, and storytelling remain central to community life, strengthening identity and cohesion. The Liberian community's strengths lie in unity, cultural pride, and intergenerational resilience,

which they channel into both community development and broader contributions to South Australia's multicultural society.

Equatorian Community (South Sudan)

The South Sudanese Equatorians Community Association of South Australia (SSECASA), established in 2003 and incorporated in 2009, represents people from the Equatoria region of South Sudan. With over 1,000 members, mostly in Salisbury and Playford, the association fosters belonging, cultural preservation, and community growth. Equatorians in South Australia maintain traditions from their diverse ethnic groups while building new opportunities in education, employment, and civic participation. Their strength lies in diversity and unity, as they bring together multiple ethnic identities under a shared Equatorian heritage. The community has invested in leadership development, youth engagement, and cultural celebrations, ensuring that younger generations remain connected to their roots while thriving in Australian society. Their contributions highlight resilience, cultural richness, and active participation in South Australia's multicultural landscape.

Nubian Community (South Sudan)

The Nubian community in South Australia is part of the broader South Sudanese diaspora that arrived mainly in the late 1990s and 2000s due to civil conflict. Nubians, originally from northern Sudan and South Sudan, are known for their distinct cultural heritage, language, and traditions. While smaller in number compared to Dinka or Nuer groups, Nubians in Adelaide contribute to the diversity of South Sudanese associations, maintaining cultural practices while engaging in settlement and integration efforts. Their strength lies in cultural preservation and intergenerational transmission of values, ensuring younger members remain connected to their roots. Despite being a smaller community, Nubians enrich South Australia's multicultural identity through cultural events, storytelling, and active participation in broader South Sudanese networks.

Congolese Community

The Congolese Community of South Australia (CCSA) is a non-political, non-religious, and non-profit organisation supporting migrants from the Democratic Republic of Congo. It promotes welfare, personal development, and economic empowerment, while fostering unity and cultural pride. Members arrived through humanitarian programs and family reunions, and the community emphasizes harmony, integration, and mutual support. Congolese traditions such as music, dance, and storytelling are celebrated widely, enriching South Australia's cultural life. The community's strengths lie in resilience, creativity, and collective empowerment, as they work to support members in education, employment, and civic participation. Their contributions highlight the importance of cultural vibrancy and unity in building strong, inclusive communities.

Vietnamese Community

The Vietnamese community in South Australia grew significantly after the fall of Saigon in 1975, when waves of refugees arrived by air, land, and sea. Adelaide became a key settlement area, and the Vietnamese Community in Australia (SA Chapter) supports cultural preservation, language education, and community services. The community is known for its strong entrepreneurial spirit, cultural festivals, and contributions to South Australia's multicultural identity. Vietnamese families have built thriving businesses, cultural schools, and vibrant festivals, while younger generations excel in education and professional fields. Their strengths lie in adaptability, resilience, and intergenerational continuity, as traditions are passed down while new opportunities are embraced. The Vietnamese community continues to enrich South Australia through cultural celebrations, economic contributions, and civic engagement.

Project Brief for Community Connect

Title: *Community Connect: Building Social Connections to Support Wellbeing in Our CALD Communities*

🧭 What's this project about?

This community-led research project is a collaboration between Flinders University, Anglicare, and Boracare. It aims to explore how we can **strengthen health and wellbeing through better social connections** in culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities living in Adelaide's Northern suburbs.

We want to understand:

- What helps people feel a sense of **belonging** and connection in their community?
- What makes it harder to build **relationships** or access **support**?
- How can we **build on the strengths** already in our communities to create better support systems?

To support this work, we'll be inviting members of your community (15-20 participants) to take part in two friendly, 60-minute workshop discussions. These sessions will be co-facilitated by Dr Lavender Otieno (Flinders University) and Mary Awata (Boracare).

In the first workshop, we'll explore what social connectedness means to your community and gently uncover the factors that help—or sometimes hinder—people in building relationships and accessing support. We'll also consider how experiences of migration, health, and injury may shape these connections.

The insights from this initial conversation will be brought back to the community in a second workshop. This follow-up session will be a chance to reflect together, confirm what we've heard, and co-create ideas for meaningful and culturally appropriate ways to strengthen support systems.

💪 Why is this important?

Our communities are strong, diverse, and resilient. Many of us speak multiple languages, have deep cultural traditions, and value family, faith, and community. These strengths help us navigate the challenges of resettling in a new country.

But we also know that some people face:

- Stress

from leaving home countries, or from experiences of **trauma** or **displacement**

- Challenges with **language**, **employment**, or **feeling included**
- A **lack of support services** that truly understand our cultures and experiences
- **Intergenerational gaps** following resettlement

Feeling **connected** to others through family, friends, places of worship, schools, and community groups is key to maintaining good mental, emotional, and physical health. When people feel lonely or excluded, it can lead to more serious health issues and limit opportunities to thrive.

🤝 What will this project do?

- **Listen to community voices**: We want to have conversations with community members, leaders, and organisations to hear what matters most.
- **Identify what's working**: We'll spotlight the existing community strengths, supports, and cultural values that help people feel connected.
- **Recommendations for community solutions**: Together, we'll discuss ideas and recommendations to improve connection, wellbeing, and access to support.

🌱 What will the outcomes be?

- More **culturally safe** support systems
- Community-informed strategies to strengthen **belonging**, **healing**, and **health**
- A stronger foundation for **future funding**, services, and advocacy driven by CALD communities themselves

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📣 How can you get involved?

We want to hear from:

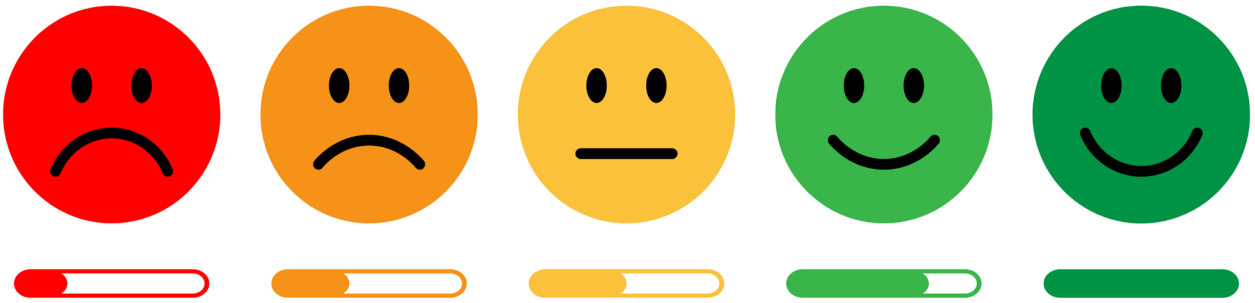
- **Community members**
- **Faith and cultural leaders**

- **Service providers** and local champions

This is an opportunity to shape the future of wellbeing **by the community, for the community**. If you have any questions or would like to accept our invitation to be involved, please email either Dr Lavender Otieno at lavender.otieno@flinders.edu.au or Mary Awata at mary@boracare.com.au

SHORT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How connected do you feel to your community?



2. What are the things/activities that help you connect with your community?

1. 2. 3.

3. What are the things that make it difficult to connect with your community?

1. 2. 3.

Workshop / Focus Group Question Guide

"Hello everyone and thank you for being here today. In this session, we'll be talking about experiences of migration, resettlement, social connectedness, and how health information is shared with communities. Your insights will help us understand both the challenges and the opportunities for improving wellbeing in our communities. I want to remind you that participation is completely voluntary. You are free to leave at any time if you wish, and you don't have to answer any questions you're not comfortable with. Your comfort and safety are our priority. Before we begin, I just want to reconfirm that everyone present has given their consent to be here and take part in the discussion. If at any point you change your mind, that's absolutely fine. You can let me know or simply step out. Everything you share here will remain confidential. We ask that everyone respects each other's privacy and listens with an open mind. There are no right or wrong answers — we're here to learn from your experiences."

Section 1 – Migration and Resettlement Experiences

Main Question:

- *The process of migrating and resettling in Australia can be both exciting and challenging. How would you describe that process for yourselves?*

Probes:

- What were some things that made the process easier?
- What were you most looking forward to before coming?
- What challenges did you experience during settlement?
- What ideas do you have for overcoming these challenges?

Section 2 – Social Connection and Community Belonging

Main Question:

- *Do you feel a strong sense of connection with your community?*

Probes:

- Are there strong social connections in your community?
- What helps build and maintain positive relationships?
- What helps you feel socially connected?

- What makes it difficult to feel socially connected?
- What ideas do you have for overcoming these challenges?

Section 3 – Health Challenges and Social Connection

Context Prompt:

- Certain conditions can make social connectedness more difficult. For example, disease or injury can add to the challenges people already face.

Main Question:

- *How do you think health issues, like physical injury, affect the ability to connect with other members of your community?*

Probes:

- How does injury or illness impact families and community relationships?
- How does the Australian healthcare system (including language differences) affect access to help or resources?
- What are some of the ways we can make access to resources easier?

Section 4 – Health Communication and Representation

Main Question:

- *Do you feel that health communication and information is explained in a way that is easy for you to understand?*

Follow-up Question:

- *Do you see your community represented in health, education, or promotional materials?*

Probes:

- If yes, how?
- If no, what are some ways this could be done appropriately?

Is there anything else that anyone would like to add today?

Thank you so much everyone for being here today. We'll share any themes that we find with you as a community so you can check and add your thoughts. We look forward to meeting again soon.

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APPENDIX G: Distress/Referral/Unexpected Finding Protocol

Protocol for participants for the project Community Connect: Exploring Health and Wellbeing through community-led engagement

Distress

- A participant indicates that they are experiencing a high level of emotional stress
- Or a participant exhibits behaviours which suggest that the focus group/workshop is stressful such as crying or shaking

Stage 1 response

- **STOP** the workshop
- Offer immediate support
- Assess the participant's mental status;
  - Tell me what you are feeling?
  - Do you feel able to go on about your day?
  - Do you feel safe?
  - Tell me what thoughts you are having?

Review

- If the participant feels able to carry on resume the workshop
- If the participant is unable to carry on go to stage 2
- Notify the researcher

Stage 2 Response

- Discontinue the workshop
- Ask the participant if he or she would like the interviewer to contact any family members
- Ask the participant if the interviewer can contact the (relevant support organisation i.e. Community Controlled Organisations, Lifeline or Beyond Blue)

Follow up

- If the participant consents, the workshop host will contact the participant with a courtesy call to check on their well-being
- Provide the participant with the interviewer's phone number and encourage the participant to call if she experiences increased distress in the hours/days following the focus group/workshop
- Notify the researcher

Possible support services

Lavender Otieno	Research Fellow Discipline of Trauma and Injury Flinders Health & Medical Research Institute College of Medicine and Public Health Sturt Road, Bedford Park SA 5042 (GPO Box 2100 Adelaide SA 5001) E: lavender.otieno@flinders.edu.au ***The CONTACT PERSON is able to refer the participant for long term counselling and support***	Tel: 08 8432 4854
Lived Experience Telephone Support Service (LETSS)	5.00 pm – 11:30 pm, 365 days a year	Tel: 1800 013 755
Lifeline	24-hour Crisis Line	Tel: 13 11 14
Beyond Blue	24-hour Crisis Line	Tel: 1300 224 636

Note: The researchers are required to notify possible support services and ensure support as per their mandate throughout the course of the research project.