

# Report on the Research Conducted in the Development of a Women from NESB Community Education Program

Office of Women's Affairs, Department of The Chief Minister, Northern Territory of Australia  
A Report on the Research Conducted in the Development of a Women from non-English Speaking Backgrounds Community Education Program Darwin, Office of Women's Affairs, 1996.

## Domestic Violence Strategy - Northern Territory of Australia

### Background

As a component of the Northern Territory Government's Domestic Violence Strategy, introduced in April 1994, consultations began with representatives from ethnic communities in January 1996, on the advisability of developing information on domestic violence for women from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB).

This decision was based on the need to ensure that all Northern Territory women are included in the Northern Territory Government's Domestic Violence Strategy community education and prevention goal of *informing the community, through a widespread community education program, that violence of this nature will no longer be tolerated* (Domestic Violence Information Kit Fact Sheet One, p 3). It rested on the knowledge that 18.6% of the Northern Territory's population is overseas born, of which approximately 50% are from a non-English speaking background (NT Settlement Plan, 1994-1998, p 8).

The concept was discussed with senior officers in the NT Office of Ethnic Affairs and members of the NT Ethnic Communities' Council who supported the project.

### Process Discussions

Initial meetings were held with staff from the Office of Ethnic Affairs who then arranged for contact with key members of the ethnic communities to advise on whether or not a specific project should be initiated, and if so, how the process could best be managed.

Research undertaken for a *Discussion Paper - Women from non-English Speaking Backgrounds in relation to Domestic Violence* (Office of Women's Affairs 1996) supported the need for culturally appropriate community education messages for women from non-English speaking backgrounds and the use of interpreters and translators when providing information to, and working with, NESB domestic violence victims and survivors. Other information confirmed that translated radio messages were most often the most effective strategy for providing information to NESB women.

Information on the project was placed in the Office of Ethnic Affairs (OEA) Newsletter of February 1996 and consultations were arranged through the OEA in Darwin and Alice Springs and the Migrant Resource Centre in Alice Springs.

### Approach Adopted for the Consultation Phase

Following the initial discussions small focus groups were convened to test and refine the radio script and poster concepts. A total of seven focus groups took place, four in Darwin and three in Alice Springs. Some of these were comprised of single ethnic and language groups and others brought together representatives from a number of ethnic groups. The language

groups represented in the focus group consultations were Chinese, Filipino, French, German, Greek, Hindi, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Thai and Vietnamese.

The objectives of the focus groups were to:

- confirm the need for a specific approach for NESB women
- consider the wording for a number of potential radio messages
- consider a variety of poster concepts prepared by two different advertising agencies from a brief developed during the initial consultation
- recommend on the languages to be translated for both radio messages and the poster/s.

Displays of the poster concept designs were also arranged for comment by NESB women attending two community education seminars in Darwin.

Meetings were also arranged with the Multilingual Broadcasting Council, Crisis Line and Dawn House staff to discuss the project.

## **Project Outcomes**

As a result of the consultation phase it was recommended by all groups that: a specific NESB approach should be added to the current Domestic Violence community education campaign

- the NESB approach should integrate community radio messages, a poster or posters with translated information, and a fact sheet explaining domestic violence
- radio messages should be translated into twelve languages - Mandarin; Cantonese; Vietnamese; Portuguese; Italian; Filipino, both Tagalog and Visayan; Thai; Greek; Indonesian and Tatum; and Spanish
- the poster/s should incorporate six languages -

Greek; Italian; Mandarin; Portuguese, Thai and Vietnamese

- radio messages should run for a minimum of twelve months on ethnic and community radio stations
- both men's and women's voices should be used to record radio messages.

Whilst there was early and speedy agreement on the scripts to be translated for the radio messages, the concept and wording for a preferred display poster was initially less clear, as different individuals and groups expressed different preferences. However once all the poster preferences were compiled into a table form, a clear preference emerged for two of the ten concepts presented to the groups...

During this consultation phase meetings were held with Crisis Line staff to ensure that the counselling service offered by that organisation could respond to the needs of NESB callers and incorporate interpreter services.

## **Action Plan**

The following arrangements were made to ensure that the NESB community education approach proceeds quickly.

### **The Office of Women's Affairs would**

- prepare final radio scripts in English for translation
- oversight production of a poster to reflect the majority view of the groups consulted
- be present during translation and recording sessions to respond to questions from translators and assist them to interpret the information provided
- continue to supply material for articles in the OEA newsletter.

### The Office of Ethnic Affairs would

- provide for access to written and voice translators
- provide initial training for Crisis Line staff
- continue to publish information on the project in the OEA newsletter
- organise recording sessions with TOP FM.

### The Multilingual Broadcasting Council would

- support the project by running the radio messages for a donation, rather than charge for air-time.

### Crisis Line would

- develop and document specific counselling protocols for all staff
- implement a training program for all counselling staff and volunteers to assist them to work with translators and interpreters
- arrange for translations into key languages so that counselling staff can ask callers which language interpreter is required, in those languages
- maintain an *Issues Sheet* and monitor the quality of response to NESB callers.

## **Additional Domestic Violence Information**

The focus group consultations and discussions with members of ethnic communities provided an opportunity for domestic violence to be discussed more generally and, in effect, became education sessions as well as consultations.

During these discussions NESB women made some additional comments that specifically apply to domestic and family violence in a cross-cultural context. These statements are included in this report to provide some additional and broader information.

In this context, NESB women suggested that some common misconceptions significantly influence the manner in which individuals from ethnic communities respond to domestic violence.

These include a (mis)belief that:

- violence in the home is neither wrong nor a crime and must be tolerated
- verbal violence must be tolerated
- financial control and restrictions must be tolerated
- social control must be accepted
- rape within marriage is a partner's right and must be accepted.

The focus groups also discussed making the poster and fact sheet information accessible to NESB women and recommended that displays include the following outlets:

- doctors' and dentists' surgeries
- health clinics
- playgroups and Family Day Care
- buses and bus stops
- Ethnic Clubs
- shopping centres
- libraries.

Two further recommendations were noted. Firstly, that any distribution of material to the ethnic community, councils or clubs would be enhanced if it was promoted by, and carried the signature of, the Chief Minister. Secondly, that posters intended for shopping centres would be most effective if they were displayed behind glass in formal displays, although this may involve a fee.

The NESB domestic violence community

education approach will commence as soon as translated material is available during the second half of 1996.

## ***Works Consulted***

Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1993, Census Characteristics of the Northern Territory, Commonwealth Government Printer

Northern Territory Settlement Planning Committee, undated, Northern Territory Integrated Settlement Plan 1994-1998, Darwin

Northern Territory Government, 1995 Evaluation Report, Northern Territory Integrated Settlement Plan 1994-1998, unpublished

Office of Women's Affairs, 1996, Discussion Paper - Women from non-English Speaking Backgrounds in relation to Domestic Violence, Department of the Chief Minister, Darwin.