



# The Digital Health Literacy and Refugee Project: Laying the foundations for refugee health literacy mediators using social media and social networks

## Background

Social media has enabled the proliferation of online groups as well as sources of information. Low health literacy has been linked to misinformation especially in multicultural and refugee communities.

This project aimed to build digital health literacy and social media skills in refugee communities in South West Sydney through participatory action research, a series of online workshops and partnerships with health and community organisations and the University of Technology Sydney.

## Objectives

- Build digital health literacy and social media skills in refugee communities in South West Sydney
- Understand enablers and barriers for digital health literacy with refugee communities in South West Sydney
- Lay foundations for communication infrastructure and resources for digital health literacy with refugee communities in South West Sydney

## Results

25 refugee community participants recruited

11 languages (Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Hazaragi, Karen, Khmer, Lao, Mandeian, Tamil, Ukrainian, Vietnamese)

Pre and post surveys as well as competency based measures indicate an increase in digital health literacy of participants.

340 community participants attended workshops on evaluating health information

Through online listening activities, project participants have alerted the SWSLHD Public Health Unit regarding misinformation in their communities. Participants have been able to advocate for health information they need.

Through the Project the SWSLHD Public Health Unit and other Health Units e.g. Stroke have been able to gather real-time information on health issues in refugee communities.

15 participants continuing to meet as volunteers as part of “communities of practice” after project completion.

Participants set up StartUp to explore potential of Artificial Intelligence in developing multilingual health communication

UTS coordinating 3, 6 and 12 month follow up bilingual calls with community participants who attended workshop to measure impact

Curriculum and resources in 10 languages regarding evaluating health information/ addressing misinformation

## Conclusion

The project results so far reinforces the benefits of genuine collaboration, acknowledging the wealth and diversity of talent in refugee communities, instead of top down “command and control” type of communication and engagement

## Acknowledgement

Core Community Services  
Fairfield City Council  
Liverpool City Council  
NSW Refugee Health Service  
NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors  
SWSLHD Public Health Unit  
University of Technology, Sydney (UTS)  
Western Sydney MRC

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For more information and to explore future collaboration on the South Western Sydney Digital Health Literacy and Refugee Project  
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