

### Communique

#### Guest presentation: Dr Atem Atem (STARTTS)

Atem is a Community Development Evaluation Officer at STARTTS.

- Atem critiqued the notion of “cohesion”: Noting the issues with treating community groups as united, homogenous and monolithic. Since not all migrant groups are the same, policymakers and settlement providers cannot approach issues with a cookie-cutter approach – or the thinking that the same action will work again and again across contexts because all migrant groups are the same. It is important to understand diversity within groups and to understand power, conflict, and tensions.
- STARTTS emphasise that organised violence (in countries of origin) directly divides communities, disempowers people, and create tensions.
- The role of service providers is to encourage recovery and understand tensions.
- The academic Judith Harman has an important book on trauma recovery. Key steps include: 1. Establishing safety, including safe spaces and environments, important for services to recognise. 2. Reconstruct trauma stories (in a positive way) – as people have their own individual stories which can be different from the wider group. And 3. Helping people to restore connections with each-other and with the community.
- There are different types of trauma that must be recognised (e.g. sexual violence or state persecution).
- Principles: Safety, trust (and trust-worthiness), collaboration and peer support, linking, empowering, and understanding intersectionality.

#### Discussion

The small group provided updates on their work, noting ethno- and religious-specific perspectives. The group discussed Atem’s talk. A SETS provider pointed out that their organisation establishes safety through offering a range of services, meaning that no-one questions why a person would enter their services – a client could be doing a course or could be seeking support in different areas.

#### Subgroup Outcome

The subgroup will work towards a Practice Resource based around what it means to work from a community, ethno-specific, and religious-specific perspective. The resource will be aimed at the wider sector to increase responsiveness. The resource will integrate the discussions from Dr Atem’s guest speaking.

**Next meeting:** The final subgroup meeting for 2023 is scheduled for 13 November (2pm – 3pm AEST).

#### **Attendees (4 SETS Staff):**

Nick Ross (SETSCoP Secretariat - SPG)

Walid Rahman (SETSCoP Secretariat- SPG)

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Atem (STARTTS NSW)

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Saja (Muslim Women’s Association NSW)

Sherry (Arabic Welfare VIC)

Preethi (CMY VIC)

#### **Contact**

The SETSCoP Secretariat welcomes any further discussion, feedback and inputs. If you would like to get in touch or would like to register interest in future SETSCoP Subgroup Meetings, please reach out to the Secretariat at:

[secretariat@setscop.org.au](mailto:secretariat@setscop.org.au)