

Annual Report

inTouch

Multicultural Centre
Against Family Violence

2022-23





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inTouch acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first inhabitants of this nation, and the Wurundjeri and Bunurong people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we conduct our work. As you read this, we encourage you to also consider the traditional owners of the land you are currently on, their continuing connection to land, waters and culture and the ongoing impact of colonisation on the Indigenous people of Australia.

We pay our respects to Elders – past and present. We express our gratitude for the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual, and cultural costs of that sharing and hope that we may move forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.



We also acknowledge the countless women who have experienced family violence, in particular women from migrant and refugee backgrounds. We recognise the courageous path they have travelled to rebuild their lives and honour their stories which continue to inspire and drive our work.



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2023 Highlights

We use our unique understanding of culture, family violence, family law and immigration to support our clients through our *inLanguage*, *inCulture* service model that recognises the expertise of people with lived experience of family violence.

Prevention and Early Intervention



1,307 people

engaged in family violence prevention and early intervention programs, such as Community Education Sessions, Men's Awareness Programs, and Organisational Training

Response

131,588 hours

of specialised family violence support delivered

132 victim-survivors

obtained permanent residency with migration agent assistance



701 victim-survivors

received legal support



126 men

who used violence against women participated in the Motivation for Change program

Recovery

77 women

participated in community-based recovery groups delivered in multiple languages



196 women

participated in inSpire's recovery programs

Empower



6 policy submissions

and research papers on the topic including

- Family violence information sharing and risk assessment reviews
- Proposals for Australia's future migration system
- Amendments to the Family Law Act



1,475 training participants

from 227 organisations attended 88 training and information sessions



Our inTouch Approach

At inTouch, we support family violence victims across their unique journey from prevention and early intervention, to response, recovery, healing and empowerment.

Prevention and Early Intervention

Community Insights and Solutions - Sector and Community

Utilises insights from migrant and refugee women's lived experiences to address the specific needs of social services, the family violence sector, and multicultural communities.

Capacity Building - Training and Impact

Provides culturally responsive professional development for organisations to enhance participants' understanding of family violence, fostering their capacity to provide accessible and effective services to migrant and refugee communities.

Joint Forces for Family Safety - Projects

inTouch partners with a variety of national and state based organisations to build family violence recognition and response capacity.

Empower

NOOR Family Violence Survivor-Advocates

Former inTouch clients influence policy, services, and media by sharing their experiences. They advise legislators, shape the narrative around family violence, and contribute to designing and improving inTouch services and programs.

Driving Change - Policy, Research and Advocacy

inTouch' activities that shape government legislation, service provision and media coverage which are informed by victim-survivors and our client services team.

Response

Safety and Security - Intake and Direct Services

inTouch offers inLanguage, inCulture case management for migrant and refugee women facing family violence. Our specialist team provides personalised support and goal-focused brokerage assistance. Services include risk assessment, safety planning, financial aid, and referrals to further services.

Access to Justice - Women's Legal Centre

A fully integrated Women's Legal Centre and Migration Agent, offering culturally sensitive and trauma informed services at the intersection of family law, migration and family violence.

Transformative Support for Men - Motivation for Change (MFC)

Through individualised case management and multilingual, bicultural group work, we engage with men from diverse cultural backgrounds who have used violence against family members.

Recovery

Recovery Programs - inSpire

Post-crisis programs for Family Violence Survivors and their children by addressing the financial, cultural, social, and institutional barriers that migrant and refugee women can face when recovering from family violence.

Reconnecting with Confidence - Recovery Groups

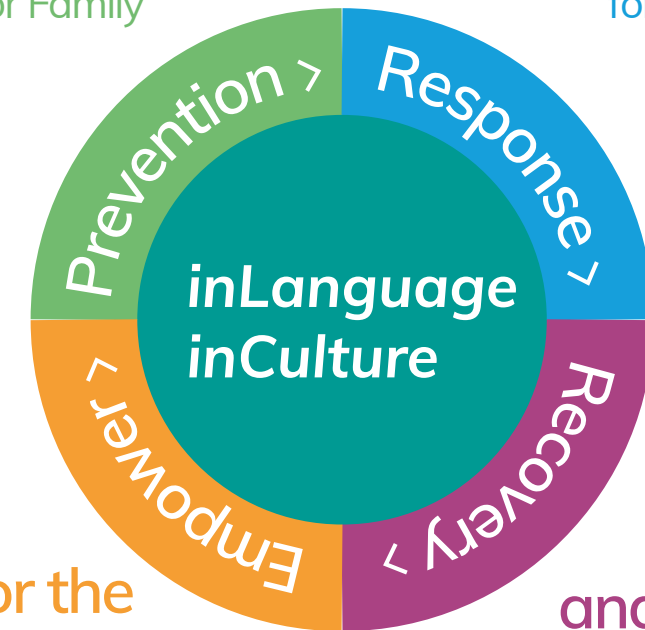
Community groups that foster healthy relationships and enhance the understanding of the impact of family violence, while building social networks and increasing access to services.

1,307 people engaged through projects

- Community Insights and Solutions
- Capacity Building
- Joint Forces for Family

1,495 individuals and 1,551 children supported

- Safety and Security
- Access to Justice
- Transformative Support for Men



NOOR advocates for the 1 in 3 migrant and refugee women affected by family violence

- NOOR Family Violence Survivor-Advocates
- Driving change

196 women and their children supported

- Recovery Programs
- Reconnecting with Confidence

'Noor' means 'light' in many languages around the world and is also a common first name used throughout South Asia. NOOR also stands for 'Narrating Our Own Resilience', acknowledging that these women's stories are powerful, and that they are strong, resilient and expert advocates.

Message from Chair

It is with a great sense of pride that I share how inTouch is actively delivering on our vision to grow and solidify our position as a national leader in addressing family violence in Australia for migrant and refugee communities.

Over the past year, driven by staff and client feedback, we've delivered significantly on our mission to expand our influence in the family violence and multicultural sectors. Key to increasing our national presence we have strengthened our existing partnerships and established new ones, while we have remained committed to gathering evidence to validate the effectiveness and significance of our interventions.

I would like to express my thanks to Michal Morris for her service as Chief Executive Officer of inTouch. During her tenure Michal guided us through the challenges of COVID-19, oversaw the rapid expansion of our services, policy agenda and the establishment of our post-recovery program inSpire along with our survivor-advocates group, NOOR.

Thank you to our Interim Chief Executive Officer Maryum

Chaudhry for her leadership during the transition period and I warmly welcome new Chief Executive Officer Rasha Abbas who brings an exceptional blend of strategic insight and operational acumen to inTouch. Her distinguished career in financial services, coupled with her extensive leadership experience overseeing large teams and demonstrated commitment to community betterment, makes her an ideal leader for our organisation as we move forward and continue our unwavering commitment to drive structural and systematic change, address family violence in our communities, and empower those we serve to move on and thrive.

Finally, thanks to everyone who has contributed their time and effort in support of our work, especially my fellow Board and committee members who generously volunteer their time to guide and support the evolution and growth of inTouch. Your insights, wise counsel, support and passion for inTouch are greatly appreciated.

I'm genuinely excited by what lies ahead for inTouch and what we can achieve through building on the solid foundations in place.

Miriam Silva AM
Board Chair



Message from CEO

Reflecting on 2023, significant milestones were achieved. Collectively we provided specialised support to more than 4,000 individuals and 227 organisations. Our services spanned from training and crisis response to legal, immigration, and family law support, all the way to recovery and empowerment programs.

In addition, our inSpire initiative has been pivotal in fostering social and economic independence and well-being, underlining our commitment to foster a more supportive and inclusive community for migrant and refugee women rebuilding their lives post-crisis.

Looking forward, we are excited about the potential for growth and development. Our strategic plan focuses on providing a range of services uniquely tailored to the complex needs of those we serve. At the heart of our mission is a trauma informed and person centred approach, ensuring that our interventions and strategies are deeply rooted in understanding and respecting the unique experiences of those affected by family violence.



Our services are crafted to address immediate needs while fostering long-term independence, emotional resilience, and social integration. We strive to empower individuals, guiding them towards confidence and self-reliance and underscoring their inherent capabilities and contributions for enriched, ongoing community engagement.

Looking ahead, we envision broadening our national presence beyond geographic boundaries to influence lives profoundly. We are committed to comprehending diverse communities and delivering nuanced support. We aim to pair our extensive reach with a deep, impactful presence, creating an inclusive, responsive, compassionate support network.

I extend my sincere gratitude to our staff, clients, volunteers, donors, partners, and the community for their unwavering trust and support.

We enter 2024 with excitement and optimism, ready for another year of success and positive impact.

Rasha Abbas
Chief Executive Officer

Our Strategic Priorities



To grow inTouch and fortify our place as a national leader, addressing the problem of family violence by informing and influencing the specialist family violence and multicultural sectors as well as the communities we live in.

Financial Diversity and Sustainability



We will build our financial sustainability, diversify our income, grow the organisation, and strengthen our capability to meet our strategic ambition.

Leadership and Influence



We will expand our influence to have a bigger voice on issues within our expertise, and become a preferred choice for government funders, donors and individuals alike.

Business Disruption and Continuity



We recognise the impact of a changing, uncertain world, and will build a dynamic, flexible and resilient organisation that has the technology, skills and knowledge to perform its work and respond to emerging environments.

People and Culture



We will invest in our staff to do their best work with the right training, technology and work practices, ensuring the safest possible workplace. We will continue to build our culture, bringing together our diverse insights to create bespoke solutions and programs.

Organisational Impact and Relationships



We will define our value proposition across the continuum of family violence and build an evidence base for our work, expanding to new spaces. We will strengthen existing partnerships and build new ones that will allow inTouch to effectively deliver on making a sustainable, national impact.

About inTouch

Since 1984, inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence (inTouch) has led in delivering culturally specific family violence services to migrant and refugee communities. We have supported many thousands of women and children, offering holistic services that embed learning from victim-survivors' experiences at the core of our operations.

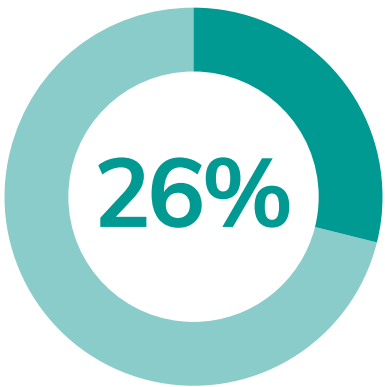
We specialise in a range of family violence services including early intervention, case management, legal and migration assistance, and perpetrator programs. Additionally, we focus on post-crisis recovery and sector-wide capability building through our dedicated training, impact and project management teams, while our leadership in evidence-based policy and advocacy is recognised at all government levels.

Our unique inLanguage, inCulture service model is the backbone of our operations. This approach is brought to life by our diverse team, with more than 80% of our staff being from migrant and refugee backgrounds themselves. Their deep cultural insights and migration experiences enable us to offer specialised case management in over 25 languages, ensuring sensitive, informed, personalised and best-practice support.

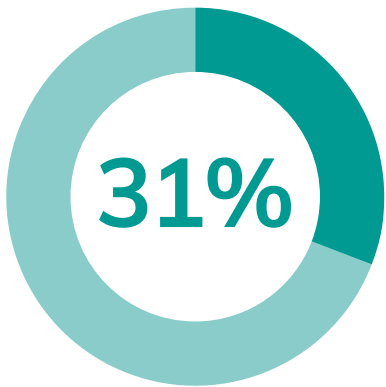
Snapshot of Our Clients

1,495 women and their 1,551 children were supported by our Direct Services team in 2022-23.

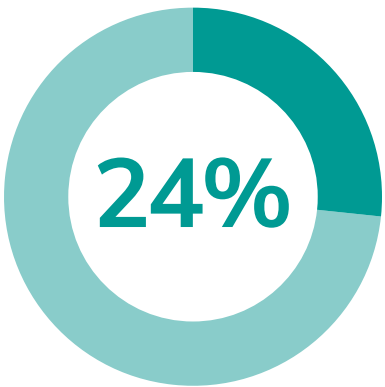
91 languages were spoken by clients from 97 countries.



were receiving some form of government allowance



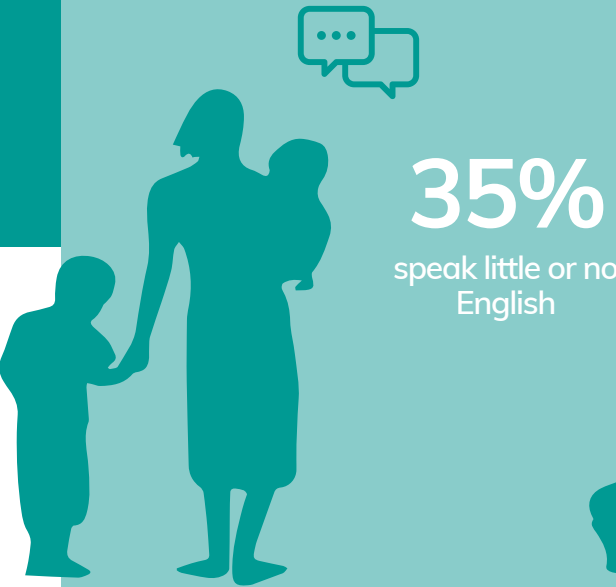
were employed



had little or no income at the time of engagement with inTouch

78% were aged between
25-44

1 in 2
were the primary carer of one or more children



1 in 5
were homeless or stayed in short-term emergency accommodation, within the last 12 months

31%
had been residing in Australia for less than 5 years



Aisha's path to safety

- Preventive Measures and Timely Responses

Aisha was an immigrant from India and a mother of three children, facing a harrowing journey of abuse and isolation in a foreign land. Her marriage, once a hope for a shared life of love and support, had turned into a nightmare of control and violence, compounded by her struggles with language barriers and the threat of visa revocation. Cut off from her family and without a support network, Aisha felt isolated and powerless.

Discovering inTouch offered her a lifeline - a chance to escape her abusive situation, regain her independence, and start anew. This critical juncture marked the beginning of Aisha's transformative journey towards healing and empowerment, leveraging her experience to drive change and support others in our community.

Prevention and Early Intervention

Aisha's initial interactions with inTouch started by participating in community programs, and gaining insights into the cultural complexities of family violence. Conversations with onsite staff enhanced her experience, deepening her understanding of and connection to available support. This engagement showcased Aisha's dedication

to breakthrough and community empowerment, paving the way for the culturally attuned support she later received from her case manager, Anika.

Response

Culturally Attuned Support

On her initial interaction with inTouch, Aisha was uncertain, mainly due to language barriers. The turning point in her journey was the warm greeting in her mother tongue, "Namaste," from Anika, her case manager, also of Indian origin. This culturally resonant support was instrumental in guiding Aisha through her challenges, offering legal

assistance with her immigration and visa requirements, providing brokerage to support her goals, risk assessment and safety planning to identify her needs related to establishing safety. With the final discussion at case closure reviewing the progress she had made to achieving her identified goals, Aisha was referred to inTouch's recovery program inSpire, to continue her healing journey.

Recovery

Self-Growth and Career Goals

Through her participation with the inSpire program, Aisha embarked on a path of personal development and professional readiness. She received career support, including resume writing, job interview preparation and practical mock interviews with her mentor, Sabrina. Meanwhile, she is growing her support network through

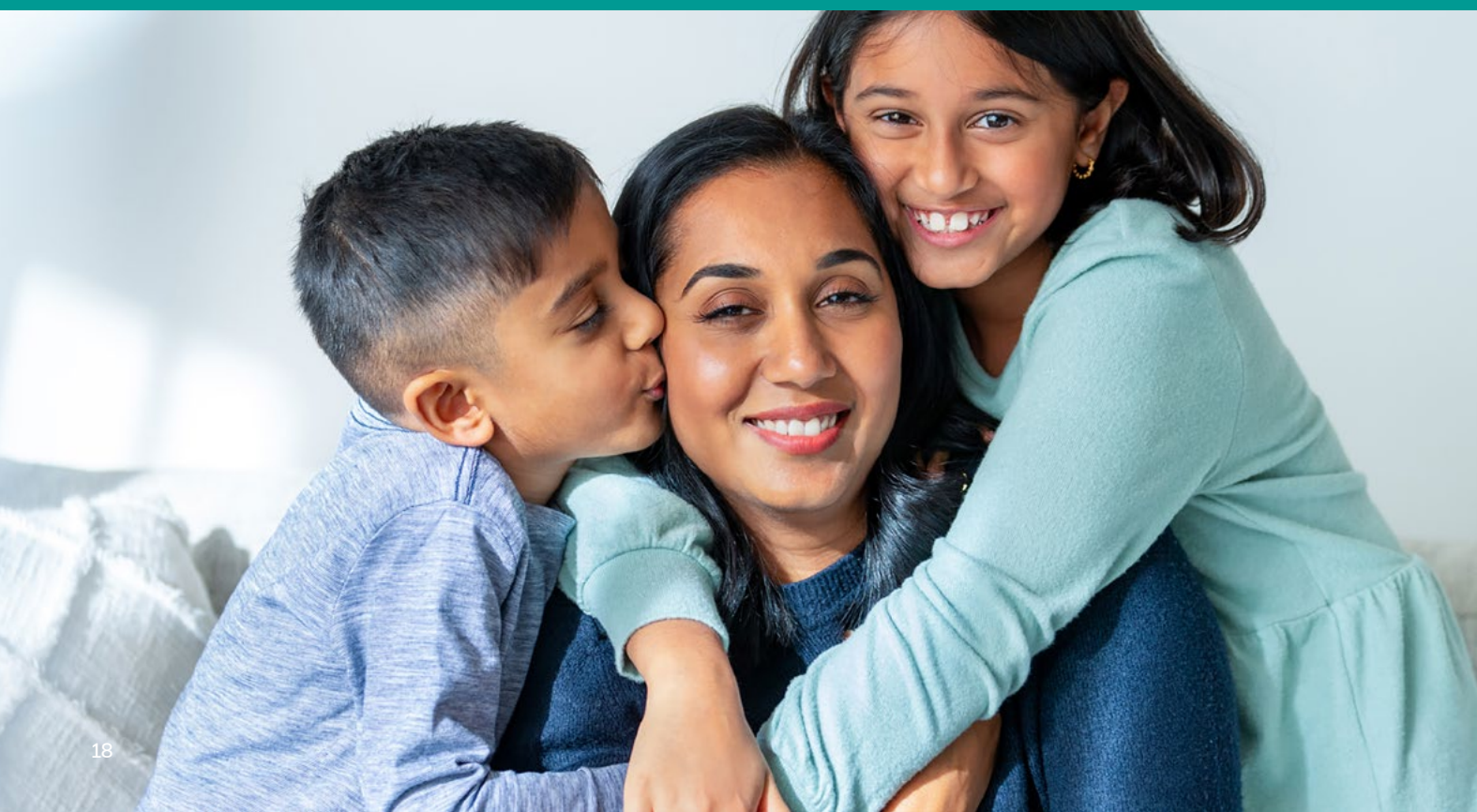
inSpire's Social Connection Events. Aisha's journey was marked by regaining confidence and a clearer vision for her future, particularly her commitment to achieving financial independence and providing stability for her family.

Empower

Community Engagement and Advocacy

Progressing in her journey, Aisha began playing an active role in community support and advocacy. She became a guest speaker and empowered others. Her involvement with the NOOR Family Violence Survivor-Advocates Advisory Group demonstrated her dedication to using

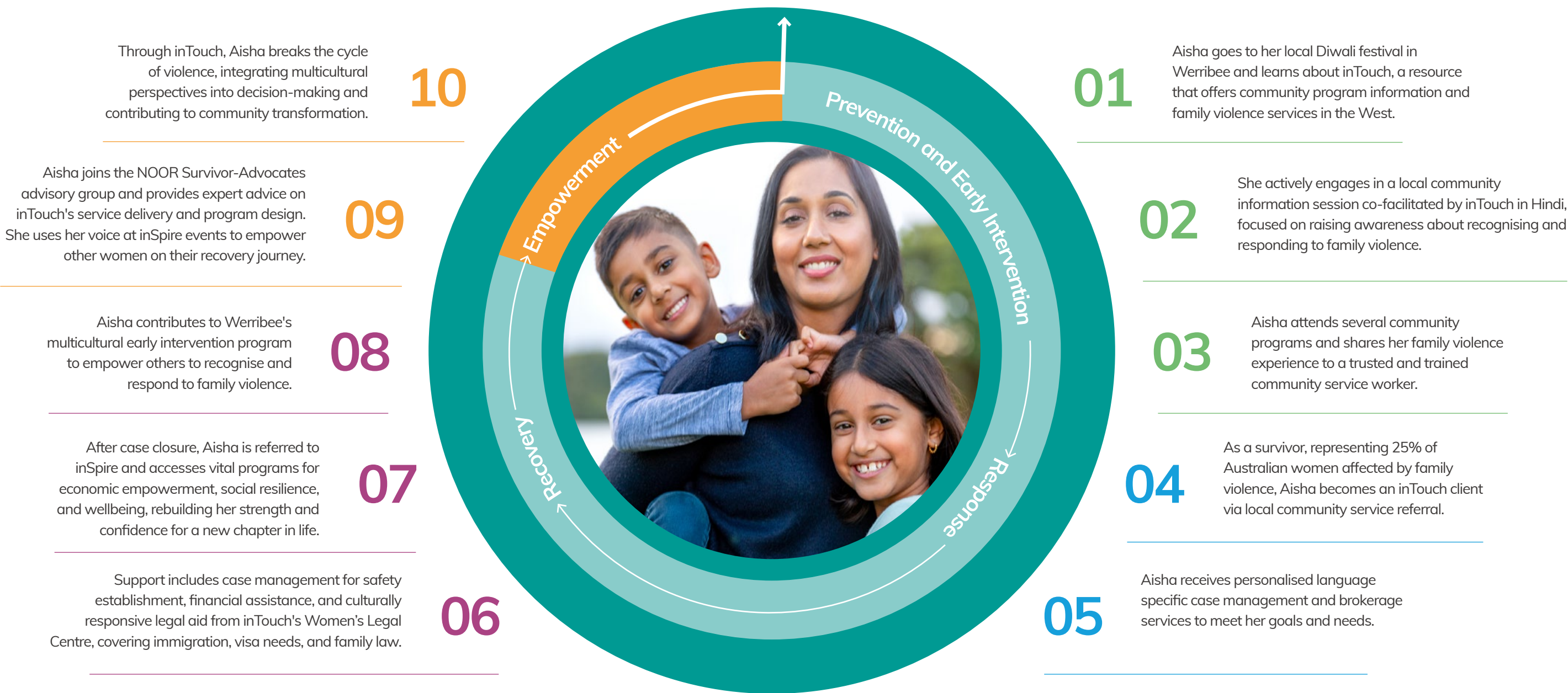
her lived experience to inform and influence policies and programs, aiming to reduce family violence and enhance support systems.



Aisha's engagement with inTouch is a story of resilience, community participation, and the transformative power of culturally responsive support. It underscores the significance of people sharing insights from their experience in shaping inTouch

programs, including community initiatives, policy making, and the collective endeavour to foster a safe, supportive, and empowering environment for individuals and communities alike.

The following is a fictional recount of a Family Violence Survivor's journey through the various services and programs offered by inTouch through prevention and early intervention, response, recovery and empowerment. While fictional, the journey is based on the real lived experience of the 1,495 individuals that have been inTouch clients over the past 12 months. Importantly a survivor's journey is never linear and involves multiple touch points from every stage throughout their journey.



Prevention and Early Intervention

Abuse and neglect of women has a significant social impact. Prevention and early intervention are effective strategies that offer long-term benefits by raising awareness of family violence causes, and challenging the social conditions that enable abuse. Promoting healthy relationships and using strengths-based, trauma-informed approaches are key.

At inTouch, we empower women impacted by family violence through community education and early intervention with men who resort to violence. We work with national and state organisations to enhance their ability to prevent family violence through awareness.

Our collective efforts underscore the belief that investing in a society committed to preventing family violence will yield positive outcomes for future generations.

Unity in Diversity

A Multicultural Moment Against Family Violence

In Melbourne's culturally diverse Western Metropolitan area, providing effective family violence services is challenging. To address this, inTouch collaborated with the Western Bulldogs Community Foundation, East African Women's Foundation, and the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association to launch the "Working Together" program. This program aims to raise awareness and establish clear support pathways for women experiencing family violence.

Central to our efforts, the "Daughters of the West" (DOTW) program, initiated by the Western Bulldogs Community Foundation in July 2023, was a 10-week initiative that united Vietnamese and East African communities. It created a shared space to discuss gender equality and address family violence, cutting across cultural lines.

Respectful Relationships in Multicultural Regional Communities

The Motivation for Change (MfC) program targets men from diverse cultural backgrounds who have engaged in family violence. Supported by a grant from the Migration Council of Australia, we expanded our outreach to strengthen community ties and introduce proactive educational efforts alongside our group sessions.

In 2023, inTouch worked with youth groups, community leaders, and the Afghan community in Geelong and Shepparton, leading to the organisation of two "Respectful Relationships Forums."

These forums were specifically designed for the Afghan community, offering sessions in Hazaragi, Dari, or Farsi. They aimed to address the effects of migration and foster harmony, safety, and communication in intimate and family relationships. Women participants had the opportunity for personal dialogues with MfC facilitators, sharing experiences and highlighting challenges like service awareness and language barriers. The forums provided resources in participants' languages, such as safety planning guides and service information, enhancing the cultural relevance and effectiveness of our family violence prevention efforts.

Our partnership with the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association and the East African Women's Foundation focused on building a stronger community through dialogue and support, enhancing community cohesion.

The program's success was clear. Participants significantly improved their understanding of and response to family violence, moving from silence to active discussion and awareness of how to seek help. This transformation in our multicultural communities is heartening, and we look forward to the future impact.

- 138 men engaged in respectful relationships programs
- 200 participants engaged in community education
- 600+ professionals attended training on cultural awareness and family violence practice sessions

"I was made to believe that I had to be extremely grateful for my life in Australia because my visa was sponsored by him."

— Yu Ling, NOOR Survivor Advocate

Capacity Building

inTouch's Training and Impact team draws on the expertise of our trainers, case managers, NOOR Family Violence Survivor-Advocates and feedback from our clients to develop and tailor professional development opportunities for a range of organisations.

This past financial year marked a significant uptick in interest for inTouch's training and impact programs, with a notable surge in participation for our online programs. This digital shift has not only broadened our training accessibility but also specifically enabled us to intensify our support for professionals and organisations in regional areas, thereby enhancing their service capabilities.

A prime example of our adaptive strategy to meet the increasing training needs in these areas was our training session, specifically tailored for regional practitioners. This session was met with overwhelming response, reaching full capacity immediately upon announcement and accruing a waiting list.

Welcome to inTouch: Bimonthly Information Sessions

Due to high demand from the family violence and social services sectors in both metropolitan and regional areas, inTouch launched welcome sessions. These online information sessions are designed for staff from specialised family violence, community sector, and multicultural agencies, and offer insights into inTouch's services, eligibility criteria, and referral processes. Each session comprehensively covers the range of programs and services inTouch provides, giving attendees a detailed view of a client's journey with our organisation and the principles guiding our recovery, advocacy, and capacity-building efforts.

In the past year, these sessions have expanded to include presentations from our Motivation for Change, inSpire, and Direct Client Services teams. These additions provide deeper insights into specific projects, organisational priorities, and the unique expertise of our workforce.

The seminars have drawn participants from a diverse range of agencies, including refugees, government bodies, legal, health, aged care services, migration and settlement organisations, and educational institutions.

Working with Interpreters in a Family Violence Setting

Over the past year, inTouch demonstrated its ability to provide customised training through a collaboration with the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health. Together, the teams developed and delivered a webinar focused on effectively engaging interpreters in family violence situations. The webinar covered various topics, including cultural and gender sensitivity in interpreter engagement, briefing methods, choosing appropriate workers, understanding distinctions in language, dialect, and ethnicity, and managing client concerns.

To enhance participant learning, the webinar included case studies, group activities, and professional insights from inTouch staff, all aimed at fostering a deeper understanding of these critical issues.

Working with Women on Temporary Visas

The Working with Women on Temporary Visas (WWWTV) training program has been tailored for family violence practitioners and addresses safety concerns for clients on temporary visas. It clarifies visa statuses, explains the Family Violence Provision, the application process, and underscores the need for prompt immigration assistance referrals.

The interactive training includes navigating the Australian Government resources, understanding visa information, and analysing real-life case studies. Co-created by inTouch Case Managers and developed with insights from our Migration Agent and Legal Centre, the training provides practical knowledge from case management, enhancing understanding of risk factors and safety planning.

Now considered part of inTouch's 'advanced' training, WWWTV has been delivered six times to 65 practitioners in the past year. Continually updated in response to changes in immigration laws, policies, and participant feedback, it has seen growing demand, including requests for additional sessions from organisations that previously participated.

As the sole provider of such training, inTouch integrates case management, intersectionality, and culturally responsive practices in working with women on temporary visas, to address a vital need in the sector.

Our National Academy: Expanding our Training and Impact

This financial year marks a significant expansion of our training capabilities into a newly established National Academy. This Academy offers evidence-based professional learning programs and specialised knowledge in family violence practices, catering to practitioners and learners. The Academy will feature a range of interactive learner experiences and professional learning programs alongside various events and initiatives. A key focus will be on the delivery of high-quality training specifically designed to address and prevent family violence within migrant and refugee communities, thereby enhancing our impact and reach on a national scale.

"This training enabled me to have a more holistic picture of the visa types, immigration processes, referral pathways and different supports available to clients on various visa types. I think the interactive discussion, and the answers provided by the trainers to the questions arising from real-life case examples shared by other participants really helps to deepen our understanding and prompt us to think it over, reflect on our own practice, and conduct collaborative work to achieve better outcomes for our clients"

— Training participant,
Anonymous Evaluation Survey

"The training increased my knowledge in all areas especially in respect to the migration journey and the complex family dynamics that may at times be overlooked or misunderstood when working with migrant and refugee communities."

— Training participant,
Anonymous Evaluation Survey



Building Capacity of Service Providers Nationally

inTouch maintained its collaborative efforts with the Social Policy Group, enhancing the proficiency of settlement service providers involved in the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support Program (SETS). Customised training sessions were conducted in major cities including Brisbane, Sydney, Perth, and Adelaide. These sessions were aimed at equipping settlement practitioners with the necessary skills to recognise and respond to family violence within migrant and refugee populations, emphasising a practice that is both culturally responsive and informed by an understanding of trauma. Additionally, inTouch

spearheaded Communities of Practice initiatives. These were instrumental in introducing and integrating new resources aimed at aiding settlement practitioners. These resources provide guidance in areas such as risk assessment, safety planning, and appropriate referrals, all while aligning with the existing frameworks, tools, and directories specific to various states and territories.

Facilitating Cross-Sector Learning and Collaboration in Refuges

inTouch collaborated with Family Safety Victoria to enhance the skills of the refugee sector through the 'Strengthening Women on Temporary Visas in Refuge' initiative. Although emergency funding is available for women on temporary visas in refuges, practitioners often struggle to assist this group due to limited social services and confidence among sector workers. To address these challenges, inTouch used the findings from a needs assessment conducted in the project's initial phase to develop online and face to face training packages. These sessions focused on culturally responsive practices, understanding various temporary visa types, and knowledge of referral options.

Additionally, some training sessions included cross-learning visits to refuges, allowing practitioners to network, share best practices, and learn from one another.

“(After the Refuge Project), our service is more aware to ask and support clients to attend local community events, religious places of worship etc. Our service has also started to celebrate cultural events within the accommodation more and ask clients how they celebrate. We also have an account with our local halal butcher, to ensure we have halal food on site when clients arrive and we're ensuring we have cultural clothing, prayer mats etc.”

— Training participant,
Anonymous Evaluation Survey



Response

A person-centred response system is essential for accountability in cases of violence, safeguarding women and children, and minimising repeat incidents.

At inTouch, our "response" encompasses actions and programs targeting ongoing violence. This includes crisis counselling, financial support, housing, medical help, and legal interventions, such as family law services and perpetrator programs, all aimed at stopping further violence by holding perpetrators accountable and aiding victims and survivors.

Our Direct Services, Women's Legal Centre, Motivation for Change, Training, and Sector and Community teams led these efforts, providing diverse programs and services to help family violence victims.

Safety and Security

Direct Services

In 2023 the Direct Services team provided case management support to migrant and refugee women, assisting 1,495 women and their 1,551 children. These clients originated from 97 countries and spoke 91 languages other than English.

Our case management services utilise the inLanguage, inCulture model, emphasising clients' cultural needs. With over 80% of our staff from migrant and refugee backgrounds, they bring an understanding of intersectionality and cultural sensitivity to their work, ensuring clients are paired with case managers who either speak their language or grasp the cultural nuances of family violence and recovery.

During the reporting period, we introduced a co-case management model in collaboration with agencies like Child Protection and local family violence services for comprehensive support. This model, first implemented in the Bendigo Partnership project, aims to fill service gaps and establish strategic partnerships.

Brokerage plays a key role in our support, providing financial aid for both immediate and long-term needs. It ranges from Crisis Brokerage for urgent necessities like food and shelter to Flexible Support Packages covering housing, education, and activities for children. In 2022-23, we distributed around \$1.5 million in financial support to aid the safety and recovery of women and children.

inLanguage, inCulture Model in Practice

I (Anika, inTouch Case Manager) moved from India to Australia in 2017 for higher education and started my Bachelor of Social Work at Monash University in February 2018, graduating in February 2023. My passion for helping others and making a positive societal impact led me to Social Work.

I began my practical experience with inTouch in August 2022, marking a year of professional development. This period has been pivotal in honing my skills, enriching my knowledge, and strengthening my professional relationships. The supportive atmosphere at inTouch has been a career highlight, offering continuous learning opportunities and valuing my contributions.

My personal history with domestic violence deepens my empathy and understanding, allowing me to better support my clients. I've seen firsthand the resilience of survivors, which motivates me further.

The inLanguage, inCulture model at inTouch enables me to effectively assist clients from similar cultural backgrounds by overcoming language and cultural barriers. This approach promotes trust and ease, facilitating healing by acknowledging the importance of cultural sensitivity in client interactions.

— Anika, inTouch Case Manager

"I want to express my deepest appreciation for the incredible support that inTouch has provided me with during one of the most difficult periods of my life. The team's kindness, compassion, and unwavering dedication to my well-being have been nothing short of life-changing"

— Anonymous, inTouch Client



- 31% had lived in Australia for five years or less
- 24% had no income, including Centrelink benefits
- 42% of Direct Services clients were on temporary migration visas, affecting their access to services like housing and Centrelink

Access to Justice

Women's Legal Centre

inTouch's Women's Legal Centre is the first of its kind in Australia embedded in a specialist multicultural family violence service supporting critical and complex cases.

During 2022-23, inTouch invested in its Women's Legal Centre through its people, volunteers and digital infrastructure and substantially increased its capacity to offer comprehensive legal support and advice. This resulted in the provision of assistance to 200 more clients compared to the previous reporting period, showcasing our heightened efficiency and reach.

Legal Advice Clinics

For over a decade, the Legal Centre has been committed to helping migrant and refugee women access justice. This year, it enhanced this commitment by establishing Legal Advice, Divorce, and Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal clinics. These clinics empower women to lodge their own applications with support from our team, empowering them to undertake steps in their own legal processes, while freeing up resources for complex cases. Legal advice clinics are held twice monthly, with urgent cases given priority through direct appointments via inTouch's Case Managers.

Health Justice Partnership

The partnership with Monash Health at Dandenong Hospital exemplifies the Legal Centre's dedication to improving access to justice. The initiative offers healthcare and free legal advice to victim-survivors, and its success led to the expansion of this model to Your Community Health in East Reservoir, reaching more women in need.

Migration Expertise

132 clients were assisted over the reporting period in securing permanent residency under the Family Violence provisions of the *Migration Act 1958* (Cth). Despite a high caseload, the Legal Centre actively shared its migration expertise through training sessions for professionals across various sectors. The training covered visa types, sponsorship, eligibility, fees, lodgement procedures, and updates on legal provisions.

Secondary Consultations

The Legal Centre's pivotal role was reinforced throughout the year by providing 249 secondary consultations, demonstrating its influence and reach in the family violence sector.

Looking to the Future

In 2022-23, we saw a growth in demand and the need for expansion of holistic services for our clients. We empower women to thrive, giving them a voice through their legal and migration journey and reach financial independence. We will continue to engage in strategic advocacy by preparing various submissions to influence policy in relation to migrant and refugee women on both a National and State level.

Submissions

In 2022-23, the Women's Legal Centre prepared a submission in relation to the Family Law Amendment Bill 2023 as well as provided feedback into the legal assistance pilot for sexual violence victims and survivors. The team also actively engages in various networks including the Federation of Community Legal Centres to ensure that our clients' stories are elevated and influence government policy.

"Your commitment to helping me navigate this process has been outstanding, and I'm sincerely grateful for all your hard work."

— Anonymous, inTouch Client

- 701 clients were provided with legal support
- 132 clients obtained permanent residency through our Migration Agent
- 249 secondary consultations on legal and migration matters were made to the family violence sector
- 33 community legal education activities were conducted
- 6 divorce application clinics were held

"I'm excited with the wonderful news that my Permanent Residency application was approved today! No words will be enough to thank you for your continuous support with exceptional expertise. It's clear that your efforts played a significant role in achieving this quick and successful approval."

— Anonymous, inTouch Client

Community Insights and Solutions

Sector and Community

Accessing Services

inTouch's research identified specific challenges that migrant and refugee women in rural and regional areas face in accessing family violence support.

To overcome these barriers, inTouch established a formal co-case management partnership with the Centre for Non-Violence (CNV) in Bendigo. The collaboration aimed to offer a more comprehensive service, yielding better outcomes for clients, their families, and communities. The project involved regular meetings between inTouch and CNV case managers to foster relationships and mutual understanding, shared workdays at each other's locations, training for CNV practitioners, and exchange of knowledge and practice.

This initiative has enhanced cooperation between service providers and delivered culturally responsive family violence services that are tailored to the needs of the local community.

“It’s really great that we have been able to work together and build a partnership to build the foundations for us to learn from each other, build our knowledge, build our capacity. Now I know what support is available to refugee and migrant women and I understand what referral processes we can take to ensure that they receive that more holistic approach, and not just referring to a specialised service.”

— Anonymous, inTouch Client

Changing Men, Healing Families: Motivation for Change programs

Motivation for Change program (MfC) is an inLanguage, inCulture group program that works with men who use family violence. The key components of the program are individualised case management, family safety contact work, alongside a trauma informed, culturally tailored group program for the duration of 15 weeks.

While originally planned as a prevention/ early intervention program, the lack of appropriate intervention options for migrant and refugee men who use violence has seen Motivation for Change used as an intervention program to support men who use family violence. The program works with two cohorts in the community: South Asian and Afghan. South-Asian groups are delivered in Hindi and English while Afghan groups are delivered in Dari.

All facilitators and Case Managers of MfC are multilingual and have a strong cultural awareness of the communities they work with. The key to effectiveness of MfC is the ability to connect with the men in their first language, breaking down the first hurdle for engagement thereby enabling the opportunity to simplify complex concepts related to family violence in a respectful manner that is culturally informed.

inTouch partners with a variety of national and state-based organisations to build family violence response and strengthen capabilities in specifically tailored projects.

Recovery

The Commonwealth Government's National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022–2032 acknowledges that recovery and healing for victim-survivors often involves life-long support through dedicated and tailored services.

Since 2018, inTouch has been addressing the need for post-crisis support for migrant and refugee women who have engaged with family violence services.

inSpire

Over the past year, inTouch's inSpire initiative continued to help migrant and refugee women overcome financial, cultural, social, and institutional barriers in their recovery from family violence.

In 2022-23, inSpire provided essential social support to 196 women, encouraging participation in activities that fostered connection and countered social isolation, especially during significant cultural events. Additionally, 60 participants made considerable progress in the Economic Independence stream. Wellbeing and Therapeutic workshops were held throughout Victoria with 77 participating to support their healing journey.

Beyond Safety: Aisha's Path to Recovery and Empowerment

Aisha is a victim-survivor of family violence, a recent university graduate and a mother of three. Prior to engaging with inTouch's services and the inSpire Program, she faced multiple challenges as her children's sole carer, including finding employment.

After relocating to a new region in Melbourne with her children for safety reasons, she felt isolated and lonely.

When Aisha joined inSpire, she expressed interest in the career accelerating programs and career mentoring program. Aisha's participation in these programs increased her confidence and sense of autonomy, setting her on a clear, supported path to healing and recovery.

Aisha gained employment as a part-time teacher and soon recognised that she had the drive and capacity to push herself further. She continued in her search to find a role that offered more secure hours to increase her income and allow time for additional professional development.

Aisha's persistence, diligence and hard work paid off, securing her a second job with her local council as a Support Officer. She has also recently joined inTouch's survivor advocate group, NOOR, which has provided her an opportunity to use her lived experience to inform and influence policy, service development and media discussions around family violence in culturally diverse communities.

- 196 participants attended social connection events
- 60 participants achieved economic independence
- 120 new participants joined the program
- \$20,000 in scholarships and mini-grants awarded to 40 participants and their children



"inSpire has provided me with a great chance to know what I am capable of doing, what my chances are out there. I feel like there's a light all around me. It's going to end up good!"

— Aisha, Family Violence Survivor

Economic Independence

Employment and Education Programs

In 2022-23, inSpire's Economic Independence stream featured two successful rounds of Employment and Education Programs in the South-East and Western region of Victoria.

This program is designed to help women explore career options, develop employment skills, and enhance self-confidence in the workplace. Additionally, it aids women in finding local support networks and strengthening their social connections, especially with other migrant and refugee women entering the workforce.

“inSpire not only changed my life but changed my son’s life.”

— Anonymous, inTouch Client

inSpire Mentoring Program

Aimed at guiding women towards employment and economic independence, the inSpire Mentoring Program focuses on overcoming barriers, offering emotional and practical support, and enhancing mentees' confidence, skills, and career progression. The second round of the program concluded in March 2023, with 90% of participants successfully completing it.

“inTouch saved my life and inSpire taught me how to survive.”

— Anonymous, inTouch Client

Social Connections and Resilience

Community Events

In 2022-23, inSpire's Social Connection program successfully delivered 11 events aimed at fostering community ties. Highlights included a Lunar New Year celebration at the Chinese Museum in February, a March picnic at the Royal Botanical Gardens, and a panel event at the Bowery Theatre during Cultural Diversity Week, in collaboration with the Western Bulldogs Community Foundation. April featured the program's fifth annual Social Connection event at the Werribee Zoo. Additionally, our partnership with the Australian Centre for Moving Images for the Goddess exhibition in May offered a valuable experience for both participants and inTouch staff.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Our wellbeing program is part of inSpire and focuses on increasing awareness of mental and emotional health issues among participants. It aims to dismantle barriers to discussing mental health and encourages supportive, informed decisions within communities.

These sessions, offered both in person and online, are led by inSpire's program lead and clinical professionals to create a safe and empathetic space where participants can learn, share, and engage in discussions. The learning process is reciprocal; we've gained crucial insights into underlying issues that have informed our approach. Additionally, the valuable information gathered is passed on to relevant departments and communities, highlighting areas for potential improvement.

Sessions have already been conducted in Dari, Hindi, and English, and future sessions are planned in Arabic, Mandarin, and Cantonese.



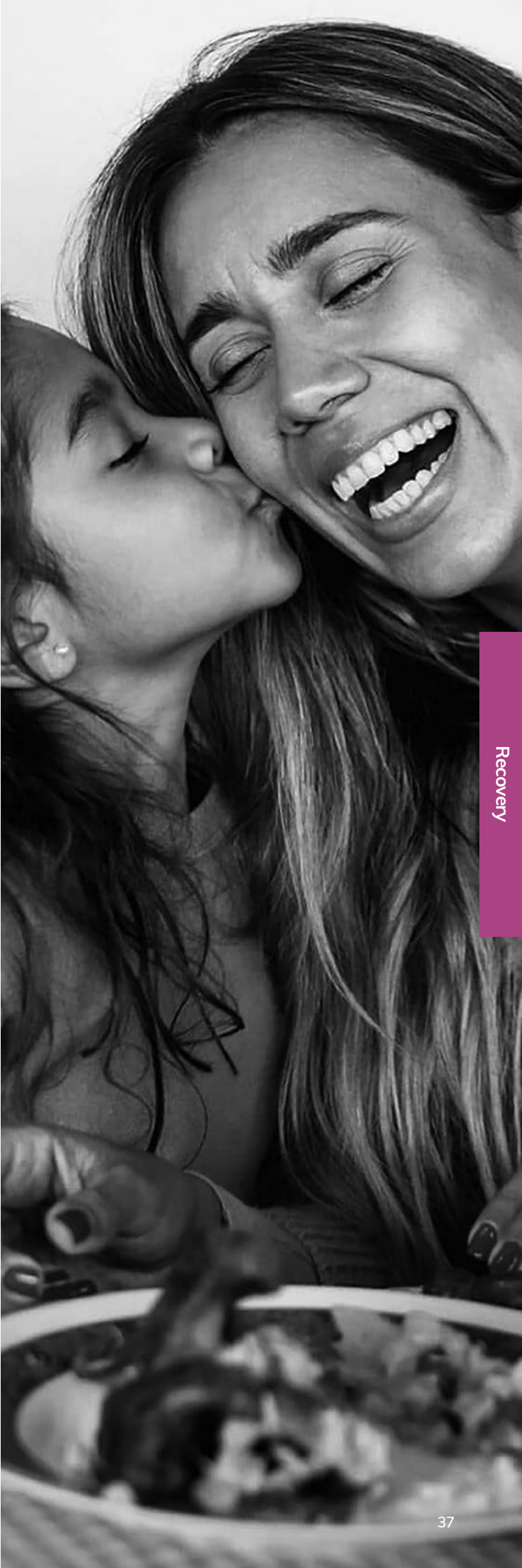
Wellbeing and Therapeutic Groups

inTouch’s recovery groups, tailored to the specific needs of women in various local areas, focus on recovery from family violence experiences.

Conducted in community settings, these groups run for four to six weeks, with each three-hour session covering topics based on participants' identified needs.

In 2022-23, inTouch operated recovery groups in three regions, collaborating with the Chinese Community Social Services Centre, City of Yarra, Oorja Foundation, and inTouch's inSpire Program to deliver programs for women from different cultural backgrounds. Some sessions catered to language or ethnically specific groups, with inTouch's case managers' cultural expertise guiding the session planning. This approach aligns with the service system's growing emphasis on meeting the diverse needs of family violence survivors.

Over the past year, these community based recovery groups saw increased participation, with 77 clients attending sessions in English, Vietnamese, Chinese, Arabic, and South Asian languages. Feedback from the sessions was extremely positive with participants feeling comfortable sharing their stories, consistently attending sessions, forming lasting friendships, and seeking additional sessions and support.



Empower

Empowerment is the cornerstone of inTouch's services, rooted in the belief that family violence victims should have access to the necessary information, education, social and economic support to make informed decisions aligning with their interests and needs.

inTouch's empowerment strategy, particularly through the NOOR program, focuses on imparting knowledge, providing training, and offering counselling. This approach empowers victims with control over post-victimisation assistance and risk minimisation, rather than attempting to stop the violence, which is beyond their control.

This strategy also involves the victims' community, enabling collective actions to prevent family violence and effectively address incidents that occur.

By understanding the various cultural, religious, family, community and personal considerations that are part of a woman's decision-making, inTouch facilitates her empowerment. We place the agency of change in their hands, ensuring it's exercised in a safe and sustainable way.

We aim to help victim-survivors regain control, moving from a position of powerlessness to one of strength and autonomy. This power transition is central to inTouch's commitment to supporting individuals in reclaiming their lives.

Policy, Research and Advocacy

inTouch's efforts in policy, advocacy, and research are driven by direct insights from victim-survivors and our dedicated client services team. These insights are critical in shaping government policy, improving service delivery, and influencing media narratives. This year, our Policy, Research, and Advocacy teams have focused on amplifying inTouch's voice as part of various national policy agendas.



Policy

inTouch engaged in a year-long collaborative effort with government stakeholders to promote our 11-point agenda, "Embed Migrant and Refugee Voices into National Policy." This initiative calls for:

- Culturally appropriate care
- Specialised training programs
- Bilingual and bicultural support services
- Streamlined referral processes
- Comprehensive data collection strategies
- Increased funding for community legal centres
- Ongoing dialogue with migrant and refugee women survivors of family violence.

Throughout 2022-23, our teams produced six influential policy papers and contributed to key government consultations, including:

- Family violence information sharing and risk assessment reviews
- Proposals for Australia's future migration system
- Amendments to the Family Law Act.

In the same period, inTouch was actively involved with numerous working groups, committees and advisory bodies including among others:

- Family Violence Reform Advisory Group
- Australian Women Against Violence Alliance
- Specialist Family Violence Courts Advisory Group
- Community Legal Centres Family Violence Group
- Family Violence Justice and Advocacy Network
- Advocacy Group for Women on Temporary Visas Facing Violence
- National Dowry Abuse Working Group
- Victorian Forced Marriage Network
- Specialist Family Violence Integrated Networks.

Research

A highlight of our advocacy in 2022-23 was the Federal Budget's announcement of revisions to migration regulations.

inTouch remains dedicated to researching and addressing the unique challenges of women on temporary visas. The Federal Government's extension of Family Violence Provisions to additional visa categories marks a significant policy advancement, one we celebrate while continuing to champion for a specialised family violence bridging visa.

As part of the National Advisory Group for Women on Temporary Visas, inTouch jointly launched the Blueprint for Reform: Removing Barriers to Safety for victims-survivors of domestic and family violence who are on temporary visas, with a national audience.

This blueprint provides an expert view on the next steps required to improve women's access to safety and justice. We encourage this to be considered and implemented alongside the new National Action Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children.

Advocacy

Maintaining a robust media presence, inTouch has consistently highlighted the plight of family violence victims over the last year.

Our communications have spanned from broad family violence discourse to specific issues affecting migrants and refugees. Media engagements on various platforms have brought critical issues to the forefront, including visa exploitation, coercive control, misidentification of the primary perpetrator, and systemic barriers faced by our clients in legal and justice frameworks.

Transformative Support for Men

The Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre conducted an evaluation of the Motivation for Change (MfC) program. This review culminated in a report titled "When you speak the language you've already actually crossed that first hurdle."

The report emphasised the importance of offering a range of different interventions for people who use violence, and in particular the importance of programs that are run inLanguage and inCulture. Critically, most clients who participate in Motivation for Change would not be eligible for mainstream Men's Behaviour Change programs.

The report outlines five primary recommendations:

- Enhance and enlarge the Motivation for Change Program.
- Create a Men's Behaviour Change Program that is specifically tailored to be delivered in the participants' native languages and cultures.
- Increase funding for early intervention programs that are accessible in the participants' native languages and cultures.
- Allocate additional funds for individual case management services for perpetrators.
- Invest in workforce development to strengthen support services.

Responding to these recommendations, inTouch has revised its delivery of the Motivation For Change program. This revision includes extending the duration of the 15-week group program to 20 weeks, incorporating an updated curriculum for the 2023-24 financial year.

The expansion ensures the program aligns more closely to meet the "No to Violence" minimum standards for Men's Behaviour Change programs.

NOOR Family Violence Survivor-Advocates

NOOR Family Violence Survivor-Advocates are a group of migrant and refugee former inTouch clients, who are on their path to recovery.

Throughout 2022-23, inTouch focused on expanding the NOOR program through the facilitation, recruitment and induction of five new members, including organising meetings and presentations with inTouch teams.

Leading The Way

NOOR Family Violence Survivor Advocates are Victoria's inaugural migrant and refugee lived experience advisory group. We would like to take the opportunity to honour the memory of a pioneering NOOR advocate who passed away recently. Her tireless efforts during Victoria's family violence reform have left a lasting legacy that continues to inspire and effect change.

Sharing Our Stories

NOOR's contributions are pivotal to understanding the lived experiences of family violence among migrants and refugees in Australia. This year, NOOR members have contributed to stories featured on platforms that includeABC, SBS, and Mamamia. The "No Place Like Home" podcast by Future Women, an award-winning series, delved into coercive control over ten episodes, including an interview with a NOOR advocate to share insights and personal stories.

An ABC article,"What Domestic Violence Support is There for Women on Temporary Visas?" featured a NOOR advocate discussing the intensified impact of violence due to cultural differences.



"To experience family violence, mitigate risk, and keep yourself and your children safe in a very dangerous place takes incredible strength and courage that only you possess. No matter where you are from — no culture, no religion, no community condones violence."

— Adalia, NOOR Survivor Advocate

Guiding Good Practice

NOOR advocates lend their expertise to consultations, engagements, and submissions, playing a crucial role in shaping inTouch's policy papers and programs. They offer practitioner guidance, notably in "How to Provide Equitable Services to Women on Temporary Visas Accessing Refuge" for the refuge project.

Collaborating with Victoria Legal Aid, NOOR provided valuable client perspectives for the development of new legal resources. Furthermore, NOOR contributed to the Domestic, Family, and Sexual Violence Commission's lived experience advisory council, advocating for trauma-informed and culturally sensitive practices in its formation.

Inspiring Others with Lived Experiences

NOOR advocates recently took the lead as keynote speakers at inSpire events, aimed at empowering migrant and refugee women on their path to recovery from family violence.

They shared their inspirational stories at mentoring and employment programs, providing unique perspectives on their experiences with the Australian workforce, education system, and their personal, continuous journeys of healing.

Looking to the Future

Since 2019, NOOR has been a pioneering advisory group in Victoria. Looking to the future, in 2024 it will expand to become a national advisory group, enhancing its influence and impact at the national level while continuing its mission of empowering migrant and refugee women as advocates.

Board of Directors

Miriam Silva AM Board Chair

Miriam has held executive roles in various major industries in Australia, such as pharmaceuticals, banking, and agribusiness. With over 25 years of experience in managing large teams globally, her influence spans the business sector, government, media, and the multicultural community. In 2012, she was recognised as one of Australia's inaugural 100 Women of Influence in the Westpac and Australian Financial Review Awards. Additionally, Miriam was honored as a Member of the Order of Australia in 2022, inducted into the South Australian Women's Honour Roll in 2011, and received the Governor's Multicultural Award for the Private Sector in 2012.

Tassia Michaleas Deputy Chair

Tassia has over 25 years of leadership experience in the non-profit and community health sectors, with a strong focus on strategy, operations, and change management. Her expertise lies in developing innovative services and programs for grassroots communities, emphasising equitable access to health for diverse and marginalised groups. With a passion for family violence and social health issues, she has served on the Mental Health Victoria Board and is the CEO of Merri Health in Melbourne's north. Tassia holds degrees in Economics and Social Work, an MBA, and is an Associate Fellow of the Australian College of Health Service Management and a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Anna Hart Non-Executive Director

Non-Executive Director
Anna is a committed human resources leader with over 15 years of experience in the field, currently serving as the People, Culture, and Change Manager at BowdenCorp in the construction industry. She has a strong commitment to community service, demonstrated by more than 20 years in various volunteer and committee roles in local organisations including council-run childcare centres, junior football clubs, and surf-life saving clubs. Anna holds a Masters of Commerce in Human Resource Management and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Imaan Khan Non-Executive Director

Imaan became a member of the inTouch Board in 2020 through the Young Women on Boards initiative. Her background includes significant experience in the multicultural and social work sectors, with internships at Services Australia, Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights, Shine for Kids, and Baptcare. Currently, she works as a Multicultural Services Librarian. Imaan is dedicated to early intervention in family violence prevention, adopting holistic, trauma-informed mental health strategies, and improving service accessibility.

Imaan holds a Bachelor of Psychology and a Master's in Social Work from the University of Melbourne.

Mark Pierce Non-Executive Director

Mark Pierce is a former diplomat who has served as Chief of Staff to two Commonwealth Ministers, for a Royal Commission, and as director of research at an international think tank. He has also served Australia overseas in Canada, Israel, France, Germany, Italy and the United States. In addition, Mark has published two books and is currently working on a book on Mumbai.

Karina Posanzini Non-Executive Director Company Secretary from 24 June 2023

Karina served as the Chief Operating Officer and Head of Service Delivery at the Institute of Public Administration Australia until August 2023. She has since taken on the role of Chief Operating Officer and Company Secretary for inTouch. Additionally, Karina holds positions as a Non-Executive Director of Carer's Victoria and a member of the CPA Australia Sector and Not-for-Profit Committee. With over 20 years of senior leadership experience in both the Not-for-Profit and Commercial Sectors, Karina is a qualified Fellow Certified Practising Accountant (CPA). She is deeply committed to community service and is dedicated to supporting culturally and linguistically diverse families in achieving safety and independence from abuse.

Alecia Rathbone Non-Executive Director

Alecia has been a member of the inTouch Board since 2018. She currently leads Housing Hub as its Chief Executive, a social enterprise aiding individuals with disabilities in finding suitable housing. Additionally, she holds the position of Non-Executive Director at cohealth, a Melbourne-based community health organisation, and at Fight Parkinson's.

Her previous roles include serving as Deputy CEO at the Foundation for Young Australians, Chief Social Enterprise Officer at the Sumner Foundation, and Chief Operating Officer at Girl Guides Victoria.

Alecia holds a Bachelor of Commerce and a Graduate Certificate in Management of Not-for-Profit Organisations. She is a Fellow of CPA Australia and a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Alyssa Rusciano Non-Executive Director

Alyssa brings over a decade of experience in human resources to inTouch, with expertise in leadership, performance management, change management, and talent acquisition. She is dedicated to driving growth and change through strategic initiatives.

Her career includes several leadership roles in dynamic environments, including a national law firm. Presently, Alyssa serves as the People Advisory Director at a global technology company.

Alyssa holds a Bachelor of Business with a Major in Human Resources.



inTouch Committees

Governance and People Committee

Chair	Anna Hart
Board Members	Alyssa Rusciano, Miriam Silva, Tassia Michaleas

Men’s Advisory Committee

Chair	Mark Pierce
Board Members	Miriam Silva
Co-opted	Andrew Do Dr Bulent Hass Dellal AO Prof. Mohamad Abdalla AM Dr Robert Millard

Finance Committee

Chair	Karina Posanzini
Board Members	Alecia Rathbone, Anna Hart, Imaan Khan, Miri- am Silva
Co-opted	Marini de Silva Samar Mcheileh

Strategy and New Business Committee

Chair	Miriam Silva
Board Members	Alecia Rathbone, Karina Posanzini, Mark Pierce, Miriam Silva, Niki Vincent
Co-opted	Jade Hart: Maria Hagias Marie Segrave

Risk and Audit Committee

Chair	Karina Posanzini
Board Members	Alecia Rathbone, Imaan Khan, Miriam Silva, Ruth Barson (part year)
Co-opted	Belinda Fong-Gardner



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The financial statements for inTouch can be found on our website.

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inTouchVic intouchvic

Toll free call to 1800 755 988 if you are experiencing family violence.

Find out more at intouch.org.au

